

Stormwater Runoff

Due to the increase of impervious surfaces, stormwater flows have become more rapid and concentrated. This forceful flow of water can erode land and pick up pollutants as it travels to storm drains.

- Direct downspouts onto the lawn, garden, or landscaped areas.
- Collect roof runoff in a rain barrel and use the water to irrigate the lawn or garden.
- Limit paved surfaces by choosing more porous options such as wooden decks and gravel or brick paths to allow rainwater to slowly seep into the ground.
- If you live along a stream...
 - allow a vegetated buffer to grow along the stream bank, do not mow to the edge.
 - plant native trees and shrubs along streams to stabilize banks, trap pollutants, and provide stream habitat.

Pesticides

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, homeowners apply 10 times more per acre than the average farmer applies! Using pesticides not only eliminates harmful insects, but also kills beneficial insects such as ladybugs and praying mantises.

- Eliminate or minimize the use of chemical pesticides.
- If you use pesticides, read the label carefully, wear protective clothing, follow the directions exactly, and spot spray. Dispose of excess material at a hazardous waste drop-off location.

Excess fertilizer can pollute local streams and rivers. During application, be careful not to spill fertilizers on sidewalks or driveways. Because they mix easily with rain water they cause pollution problems if washed into a storm drain. Remember, our storm drains empty directly into local streams and rivers without any treatment.

- Apply only the recommended amount of fertilizer needed and calibrate the spreader's settings.
- Never apply fertilizer to frozen ground or when rain has been forecasted.
- Use organic fertilizers such as grass clippings and compost.

Note: By leaving grass clippings on the lawn or composting them, you can save up to 25% on fertilizer costs.

Common chemicals used in our homes and vehicles are toxic and should never be poured down storm drains, on the ground, in gutters, or in local waterways. One gallon of oil poured down a storm drain can contaminate up to one million gallons of drinking water. Contact the Delaware Solid Waste Authority at 1-800-464-7080 or www.dswa.com for a complete list of accepted materials and drop off locations in your area.

- Recycle motor oil and filters.
- Dispose of vehicle fluids and household chemicals at a hazardous waste drop off location.
- Regular vehicle maintenance reduces the potential for leaks.

Nutrients & Bacteria

Some of the excess nutrients found in our waterways can be attributed to yard waste common household soaps, detergents and even our pets. These excess nutrients can cause algae blooms and fish kills. In addition to contributing extra nutrients to local waterways, pet waste contains disease causing bacteria and viruses.

- Compost grass clippings, brush, and other yard waste — never dispose of these materials in a storm drain or local stream.
- Wash your car in a grassy area where the water can infiltrate or take it to a commercial car wash.
- As part of your lawn maintenance, collect your pet waste and dispose of it in the garbage or flush it.

What can YOU do to help protect our water?

Use the following check lists around your home and yard to help prevent storm water pollution from entering local storm drains and protect Delaware's water quality.