

## What is Stormwater?

Stormwater is rain that falls on roofs, lawns or paved areas, like driveways and roads, and is carried away by a system of stormwater pipes or culverts and ditches. As it flows over the land surface, stormwater picks up or is contaminated by debris, chemicals, dirt and other pollutants. This **untreated** water is discharged into the waterbodies we use for swimming, fishing and drinking water.



## Why should I care?

Contaminated or polluted stormwater can lead to significant water quality problems.

- Sediment clouds the water—making it difficult for aquatic plants to grow and destroying aquatic habitats.
- Excess nutrients cause algae blooms. Oxygen levels are depleted when the algae die and decompose. Fish and other aquatic organisms can't live when oxygen levels decrease.
- Bacteria and other pathogens (commonly found in fecal waste) discharged in swimming areas create health hazards and cause beach closings.
- Debris washed into the water can choke, suffocate or disable aquatic life (ducks, fish, turtles and birds).
- Household hazardous wastes (insecticides, pesticides, paint, and auto fluids) can poison aquatic life.
- Polluted stormwater often affects drinking water sources—human health is at risk and water treatment costs rise.

## Additional Information

Syracuse Urban Area Stormwater Phase II Program

<http://www.cnyrpd.org/stormwater-phase2/>

New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation

<http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/dow/mainpage.htm>

United States Environmental Protection Agency

<http://www.epa.gov/npdes/>

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Participating municipalities include the towns of Camillus, Cicero, Clay, Dewitt, Geddes, LaFayette, Lysander, Manlius, Marcellus, Onondaga, Salina, Sullivan, Van Buren, the Villages of Baldwinsville, Camillus, East Syracuse, Fayetteville, Liverpool, Manlius, Marcellus, Minoa, North Syracuse, Solway, the City of Syracuse and Madison and Onondaga Counties.



Information Provided By:

“Making Your Home the Solution to Pollution” by the United States Environmental Protection Agency

“After the Storm: A citizen’s guide to Understanding Stormwater” by the United States Environmental Protection Agency

“Stormwater Pollution: The difference is you” by the NSW Environmental Protection Authority

“Polluted Urban Runoff: A source of concern” by the University of Wisconsin - Extension

“Frequently Asked Questions” by the Ventura County Watershed Protection District

[www.co.marin.us](http://www.co.marin.us), [www.neatoricart.com](http://www.neatoricart.com), [www.mostateparks.com](http://www.mostateparks.com) (graphics)



# Stormwater Pollution Prevention: You can make a difference!



# Ways You Can Help Prevent Stormwater Pollution

## Lawn and Garden Maintenance

- Use fertilizers and pesticides sparingly.
- Select native plants and grasses that are drought tolerant and pest resistant.
- Compost or recycle yard waste.
- Cover piles of dirt and mulch to prevent them from washing into drains.
- Sweep up yard debris, rather than hosing down areas.
- Plant grass or vegetation where soil is exposed.



## Cigarette Butts and Other Trash

- Put your cigarette butts and other litter in garbage bins.
- If there is no garbage bin handy, hold onto your litter until you find one.



- Pitch in and help clean up littered areas.
- Sweep up and properly dispose of construction debris like concrete and mortar.

## Hazardous Waste and Solvents

- Use hazardous substances (paints, solvents cleaners) in the smallest amounts possible.
- Store substances properly.
- Clean water based painting supplies over soil.
- Filter and reuse paint thinner.



- Dispose of excess paints during household hazardous waste collection programs.
- Clean up spills immediately.
- Dispose of solvent waste by following the instructions printed on the label.

## Swimming Pool and Spa Care

- Drain your pool only when the test kit does not detect chlorine levels.
- Whenever possible, drain your pool or spa into the sanitary sewer system.
- Properly store pool and spa chemicals to prevent leaks and spills, preferably in a covered area.

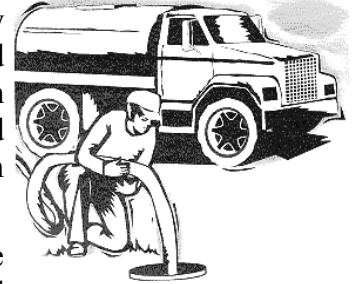
## Pet Waste Management

- When walking your pet, pick up the waste and dispose of it properly.
- Flushing pet waste is the best disposal method.
- Do not dispose of pet waste near storm drains, culverts, ditches or waterbodies.



## Septic System Maintenance

- Have your system inspected by a professional every three years.
- Pump your tank as necessary (every three to five years).
- Care for the septic leach field by not driving or parking vehicles on it.
- Plant only grass over and near the leach field to avoid damage from roots.
- Don't dispose of household hazardous waste in sinks or toilets.



## Vehicle Maintenance and Repair

- Use a commercial car wash or wash your car on a lawn or other unpaved surface to minimize the amount of dirty, soapy water flowing into the storm drain, culvert or ditch.



- Check your car, boat, motorcycle, machinery and equipment for leaks and spills.
- Clean up spilled fluids with an absorbent material like kitty litter or sand.

- Recycle used oil and other automotive fluids at participating service stations. Don't dump these chemicals down the storm drain, in culverts or ditches, or dispose of them in your trash.