

Septic Systems - Have your system inspected, especially if it is more than 15 years old.

Refrain from dumping household chemicals, oil, or pesticides down the drain or into a toilet.

These substances will inhibit the action of bacteria that keep the septic tank system functioning.



Soil Erosion - Seed grass on any bare soil around your house, paying special attention to hillsides. When soil is washed off the land surface and into a water body it is a pollutant.

Rooftops - Rooftop runoff may appear clean, but often contains pollutants that have been deposited from the atmosphere.

◆ Collect roof water in rain barrels and reuse it for watering your lawn or garden.

◆ Direct gutter downspouts to a well vegetated area. Lawns will soak up much of the water and filter out the pollutants.



For more information, visit these websites:

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation : Division of Water

www.dec.state.ny.us/website/dow/mainpage.htm

Phase II General Permits and Information

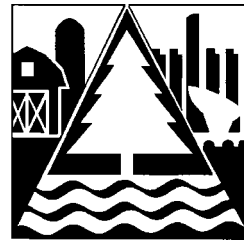
www.dec.state.ny.us/website/dow/PhaseII.html

United States Environmental Protection Agency: National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System

www.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater

Center for Watershed Protection

www.cwp.org



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This publication was made possible through funding by the Lower Hudson Coalition of Conservation Districts.



HOME OWNERS GUIDE TO PREVENTING STORMWATER POLLUTION



Photo courtesy of Washington State Department of Ecology

**A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO
HELP YOU PROTECT
WATER QUALITY IN YOUR
COMMUNITY**

WHAT IS STORMWATER?

Stormwater is water from rain or snow melt that falls onto lawns, rooftops, roads, driveways, and other outdoor surfaces and is not soaked up by the soil. Most of this water flows into storm drains. This forms a direct pathway which rapidly transmits pollutants such as fertilizers, animal waste, oil and grease to rivers and streams. The receiving waters may then become harmful to fish and wildlife, and unsafe for recreation.



The majority of stormwater pollutants do not originate from discrete point sources (e.g., a pipe discharging industrial waste). Stormwater pollutants are present throughout the urban landscape and are generally termed *non-point source* (NPS) pollutants. If you drive a car or maintain a lawn, then you may be a contributor of NPS pollutants.

With a few simple practices we can do much to clean up our streams and rivers, improve fish and wildlife habitat, and protect our water supply.

STEPS TO MINIMIZE STORMWATER POLLUTION

Fertilizers - Fertilizer isn't a problem if it is used carefully, but if you use too much fertilizer or apply it at the wrong time, it can easily wash off your lawn into lakes or streams. Nutrient enrichment is a primary cause of harmful and unsightly algae blooms.



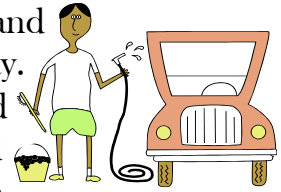
- ◆ Use fertilizers sparingly and according to the directions.
- ◆ Get your soil tested - contact your local Cornell Cooperative Extension for an inexpensive soil test.
- ◆ Do not fertilize if rain is forecasted within the next 48 hours.

Vehicle Maintenance - Check periodically for leaking oil, gasoline, engine coolant and other fluids. Fluids that leak from cars onto roads or driveways can be washed into storm drains.



- ◆ Use ground cloths or drip pans beneath your vehicle. Use cat litter, sand or other absorbent materials to clean up oil or chemical spills.
- ◆ Never dispose of oil or other engine fluids down the storm drain, on the ground or into a ditch. Recycle fluids at a participating service station.

Washing Your Vehicle - Many soaps contain phosphates and other chemicals that harm fish and impair water quality. The soap, dirt and road grime washed from your vehicle can end up in the nearby storm drains.



- ◆ Wash your car on a grassy area so the soil can filter the dirty water.
- ◆ Go to a commercial car wash where the water can be properly discarded or treated.

Pet Waste Disposal - Pet waste is full of coliform bacteria and poses health risks to pets and people. Animal wastes are readily transported by rainfall into storm drains.

◆ Scoop it up and flush it down the toilet. Your septic system or community sewage treatment plant will treat the pet waste.



- ◆ Compost it properly - contact your local Cornell Cooperative Extension for details.

Swimming Pools - Before draining the water in your pool, test the water to make sure no chlorine is detected. Direct the drainage to a sanitary sewer system. Some areas may require a permit (check with your municipality).

