



# Storm Water Basics

## Questions & Answers

2002

**T**his fact sheet provides basic information about storm water pollution in urban areas like ours. Our community has a plan to help improve local storm water quality, and you can be part of the solution!

### What is storm water?

Water that comes from a rain event or melting snow is known as storm water.

### What is storm water runoff?

In urban areas, rain or snow that falls on hard surfaces such as roads, driveways, rooftops, and parking lots is not absorbed. This storm water runs off into storm drains that discharge into local rivers, streams, lakes, and ponds. You can see these drains at street corners or along roadways.

### Why is storm water a problem?

Storm water runoff picks up pollutants from hard surfaces and carries them to storm sewers that discharge into our local water bodies, without treatment. Excess storm water runoff can also contribute to flooding.



*Storm water runoff picks up pollutants and carries them into creeks like this one.*

### What are the most common pollutants found in storm water?

Pesticides, fertilizers, oil, grease, road salt, solvents, raw sewage, silt and other solid materials are often found in storm water.



*Polluted storm water can severely impact our environment.*

### How does polluted storm water affect our environment?

It can lead to fish kills, destruction of wildlife habitat, loss of aesthetic value, impaired recreational areas, and contaminated drinking water resources.

### Is this just a local problem?

No, storm water pollution is a problem nationwide. In fact, it is estimated that 40% of water bodies in the United States are polluted and do not meet national water quality standards.

### What is the government doing about the storm water problem?

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recognized that polluted storm water was a widespread problem and began working on a solution in the early 1990s. In 1999, the U.S.EPA established a new storm water program that requires urban communities to implement a plan to improve the quality of storm water entering our waterways and reduce the negative impacts to the environment.

## Do we have a storm water plan?

Yes. We are one of 47 municipalities in Hamilton County that has developed a storm water plan. You will be hearing a lot more about our plan in the next few months.

## Where can I go for more information about storm water?

If you have additional questions about storm water or storm water pollution, please call (513) 831-4192.



*Improving the quality of storm water will lead to a better environment for all of us.*

## 10 Things You Can Do to Help!

As a resident in the community, there are 10 simple things you can do to help improve the quality of storm water that enters our nearby streams, creeks, lakes, and rivers.

1. Do not dump anything into storm water drains.
2. Report anyone who dumps chemicals into storm drains by calling (513) 831-4192.
3. Participate in community clean-ups, especially around local waterways.
4. Avoid overuse of fertilizers and pesticides. Use only the amount needed and apply only when necessary.
5. Sweep up grass clippings and tree trimmings, do not hose them into the street.
6. Clean up pet waste from your yard. (It can carry harmful bacteria, parasites, and viruses.)
7. Store oil, gasoline, antifreeze, and other automotive supplies properly. Keep containers tightly sealed.
8. Take old paint, pesticides, automotive products, and batteries to a hazardous waste handling facility. Call the Hamilton County Department of Environmental Services at (513) 946-7700 or visit [www.hcdoes.org](http://www.hcdoes.org) for more information.
9. Wash vehicles at a commercial car wash or on a non-paved surface to avoid draining into the storm sewer.
10. Pick up litter whenever you see it.



## Did You Know? Facts about Water!



One quart of oil dumped down a storm drain can contaminate up to two million gallons of water, making it unfit for consumption.



The water we drink, shower with, and swim in today is the same water that the dinosaurs used. That's right, there is no "new" water on Earth. It is constantly getting recycled as shown below.



80% of the Earth's surface is water.



97% of the Earth's water is in the ocean. 2% is frozen. Only 1% is usable and only part of that is suitable for drinking.

## The Hydrologic Cycle

