

Pet Waste Doesn't Belong to the Drain

Stormwater runoff is precipitation from rain or snowmelt that flows over the ground. Runoff is usually collected by catch basins and then conveyed untreated into waterbodies we use for recreational activities like swimming, fishing, or as a source of drinking water.

Any (pet) waste dumped into catch basins will be discharged untreated to the closest stream, pond, lake, wetland or river causing health and environmental problems and becoming a public nuisance.

Did You Know?

- Pet waste significantly contributes to pollutants (bacteria and organic matter) in Waltham's streams and ponds such as the Charles River, Chester and Beaver Brooks, Hardy Pond, or receiving wetlands.
- Waste dumped or washed into catch basins (stormwater drains) is carried directly to rivers through the stormwater drain system. Even waste left in the street, far from a catch basin, can get washed into the drains during storms.
- Pet waste can carry viruses and bacteria that are extremely harmful to humans.
- Pet waste contains nitrogen and phosphorus nutrients that accelerate growth of damaging algae and aquatic weeds.

What You Can Do

- Always clean up after your pet and dispose of the waste in the trash, in a sealed or tied plastic bag
- Encourage your neighbors and other pet owners to be responsible; it's not hard, and it's part of your responsibility as a pet owner.

What You Shouldn't Do

- Don't dispose of waste in a catch basin (stormwater drain). These systems go directly to local rivers.
- Don't use pet waste as a fertilizer. Bacteria in pet waste does far more harm than good.
- Don't add pet waste to a compost pile. The pile will never get hot enough to kill disease-causing organisms.

How Much It Will Cost You

- The City of Waltham performs a costly stormwater outfall monitoring program. Improperly disposed of pet waste can easily result in contaminated outfalls and additional sampling requirements.
- When severe contamination is identified in an outfall, a detailed investigation process is required to try to identify the source of contamination per EPA's requirements. However, when the source of contamination is pet waste, it is almost impossible to identify the origin of the contamination. The investigation efforts are very expensive and are paid **with your tax dollars.** You can help the City of Waltham save thousands of dollars every year by disposing of your pet's waste properly.

More Information

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