

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.



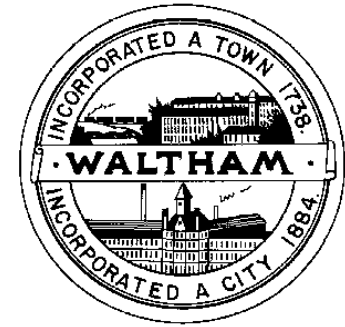
Contact Information:

- ☎ To report blocked storm drains, call the City of Waltham Engineering Water & Sewer Dept. at 781-314-3820.
- ☎ If you see someone illegally disposing of materials, call 911 to report it.

City of Waltham
Environment Committee
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City of Waltham Massachusetts



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.

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.



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.

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 oil-based paints during household hazardous waste collection days at the Minuteman Regional Hazardous Waste Center in Lexington.
- Harden excess water-based paints and dispose of in regular household trash pick-ups. Paint hardeners can be purchased at many hardware stores.

Cigarette Butts and Other Trash

- Put your fully extinguished cigarette butts and other litter in garbage bins or other proper receptacles.
- 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.

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 and dispose of at the household hazardous waste collection facility.
- 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.