



Storm Water Pollution Prevention Tips

FACT SHEET 1

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU
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Oahu is home to nearly one million residents who have a direct effect on our island environment and water quality.

WHAT IS STORM WATER?

Storm water suggests large quantities of water (from rain, flooding) at any one given time. Basically, homeowners should keep three things in mind: 1) Storm water that stays on their property and soaks in is a resource helping replenish our ground water; 2) Runoff should stay as clean as possible before making its way to the nearest storm drain; 3) Unlike the sanitary sewer system, anything dumped into the storm drain system usually flows directly into the nearest stream or drainage channel, usually without any treatment to remove pollutants.

With more than 20,000 storm drain inlets, and over 670 miles of storm drains to clean and maintain, we need your help.

WHAT IS POLLUTED RUNOFF?

Because impervious surfaces (roofs, driveways, compacted soil, sidewalks, gutters, roads, parking lots, and other urban or developed land) do not allow rain to soak into the ground, the result is urban runoff.

This runoff becomes polluted by litter, pesticides, fertilizers, sediment from construction, bare soil, oil, pet waste, grass clippings and leaves that it picks up along the way to storm drains. In addition to rain, various human activities like irrigation, car washing, and malfunctioning septic tank can also be the source of polluted runoff.

When polluted runoff reaches a water body it can have a harmful impact on the plants and animals in and around the water. It can also affect humans who swim or fish in the water, or whose drinking water comes from the water body.

WHAT ARE POLLUTANTS?

“Pollutant” means any waste, cooking or fuel oil, waste milk, waste juice, pesticide, paint, solvent, radioactive waste, hazardous substance, sewage, dredged spoils, chemical waste, rock, sand, biocide, toxic substance, construction waste and material, and soil sediment. The term also includes commercial FOG waste as defined under Revised Ordinances of Honolulu Section 14-5A.1.

USEFUL TIPS FOR RESIDENTS



Urban runoff entering a storm drain

WHAT ARE BMPs?

Many simple yet effective methods can be used to help minimize individual runoff. These are called Best Management Practices or BMPs. Some storm water BMPs can be implemented when first planning and building the home and designing the landscape. Others are incorporated into daily activities. The cumulative impact from all residents in a watershed, the land area that “sheds water” to a single body of water, can have a big impact on water quality.

Here are 9 simple actions you can do around your home to be an Everyday Clean Water Hero!

- 1. Keep It Clean:** It is your responsibility to keep sidewalks, curbs and gutters in front of your property clean.
- 2. No Dumping:** Mark storm drains with the message, “No Dumping, Drains To Ocean,” to help the community make the connection between neighborhood storm drains and local waterways used for drinking water and recreation.
- 3. Do It Right:** Use water-based paints whenever possible. Never clean brushes or rinse paint containers in the street, gutter or near a storm drain. Clean water-based paints in the sink, and oil based paints with thinner. Wrap dried paint residue in newspaper or let it harden in its container and dispose in the trash.
- 4. Don’t Be An Oil Drip:** Identify and fix oil leaks on your vehicle; clean up drips and spills with absorbent material; dispose of used oil in an oil change box.
- 5. Car Wash:** The best practice is to use a commercial car wash, where the wash water is recycled. When washing your car at home, wash it on grass, gravel or a pervious surface, e.g. grass pavers, so water can soak into the ground. If you wash your car in a driveway or City street, use water and phosphorous-free soap, sparingly, with a bucket, sponge, and nozzle on the end of the hose to conserve water and minimize the amount of phosphates entering storm drains, streams and the ocean.
- 6. Cover Up:** Prevent soil and debris from leaving your property.
- 7. Read The Label:** Read and follow the label on all fertilizers and pesticides. The label is the law.
- 8. Yard Maintenance:** Gather grass, leaves, and yard trimmings for proper disposal or composting.
- 9. Pick It Up:** Remove and dispose of pet waste before you leave an area.

Environmental Concern Line 768-3300

www.cleanwaterhonolulu.com



Discharging pollutants to the storm drain system is against the law. Violations of the Clean Water Act can result in fines of up to \$25,000 per violation, per day.

Know the law to avoid fines. The Clean Water Act gave the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) authority to implement water pollution control programs. In an effort to comply with the EPA's mandate, the Revised Ordinances of Honolulu, Section 14-12.23(a) Environmental Quality Control - Violation states, "It shall be unlawful for any person to discharge or cause to be discharged any pollutant into any drainage facility which causes a pollution problem in state waters, or causes a violation of any provision of the city NPDES permit or the water quality standards of the State of Hawaii."

Be A Part Of The Solution

The City and County of Honolulu, working under Federal Clean Water Act Guidelines, has a number of public education programs that focus on targeted participation and involvement to minimize and prevent urban runoff pollution. Existing projects such as Adopt-A-Stream/Adopt-A-Block, storm drain stenciling, World Water Monitoring Challenge, Make A Difference Month, Earth Month, Annual Pearl Harbor Bike Path Cleanup, and workshops provide opportunities to educate an interested and committed neighborhood.



Report It, Who to Call

As a resident, you can make a difference, both on the job and in your community. When you're at home, share your knowledge with neighbors and family. As you drive to work, report any illegal discharge.

Spill Response (Hazard Evaluation and Emergency Response)

- Local (HFD): 911 (24/7)
- State (HSERC): 586-4249 (business hours), 247-2191 (after hours)

Storm drain connection license 768-8106, <http://www.honoluludpp.org/ApplicationsForms/SiteEngineeringandSubdivisionPermits>

Clean stream hotline: 768-7890 (potential flood problem)
Residential code enforcement (complaint investigations related to zoning and housing code for one and two family dwellings, sidewalk maintenance, vacant lot overgrowth, animal structures and setbacks) 768-8159

For questions or concerns regarding NPDES permitting, storm water illegal discharges, storm water public outreach, and/or storm drain connection licenses, call 768-3268.

SIDEWALKS, CURBS AND GUTTERS

- Do keep sidewalks, curbs and gutters around your property clean by sweeping up debris and disposing of it in the trash prior to hosing with plain water. Direct wash water to a planted area so the wash water can soak into the ground.
- Use dry sweep or rags to absorb oily residue followed by washing afterwards with clean water. If runoff cannot be directed to a planted area, wash in an open area, but keep the water on your property and use a storm drain inlet protector, if possible. Remember, it is a property owner's responsibility to keep these areas clean.
- The Revised Ordinances of Honolulu (ROH), Section 14-20.1 Cleaning and Maintaining Sidewalks, Driveways states, "Every property owner whose land abuts or adjoins a public street shall continually maintain, and keep clean, passable and free from weeds and noxious growths, the sidewalk and gutter areas."

SEDIMENT

- Preserve streamside vegetation on your property.
- Phase construction in stages to limit soil exposure if the project requires clearing or grading of a large area. Once a section has been cleared, stabilize all exposed soils immediately with a grass or mulch cover or geotextile fabric to protect soil until more permanent plants are planted or become established.
- Avoid grading or clearing during the wet season. Cover exposed piles of soil, construction materials and waste with tarps or temporary roofs. Before it rains, sweep and remove materials from surfaces that drain to catch basins, storm drains or stream channels.
- Keep construction debris away from sidewalks, streets, gutters, and storm drains.
- Sweep or scoop up cement washout, concrete dust, or mud rather than hosing into driveways, streets, gutters or storm drains.
- Direct runoff from bare ground to vegetated or stabilized areas to minimize erosion.
- Mitigation practices on construction sites are often overlooked because of inadequate attention to drainage patterns and runoff volumes or because the contractor relied too much on silt fences to retain sediment. Inspect sediment control practices after each storm event, making any needed repairs immediately. Remove sediment from behind silt fences and storm drain inlet protection devices as needed.

YARD WASTE

- Contain yard waste and place it at the curb for recycling collection. Prevent blowing or hosing of grass clippings, leaves, fruits, tree cuttings and other yard waste into the storm drain. Prevent dumping of yard waste in drainage channels.
- Use fallen leaves for mulching. Compost your biodegradable wastes.
- Grasscycle! Leave grass clippings on lawn after mowing. The nitrogen from the clippings acts as a natural fertilizer.
- Download Hawaii Backyard Conservation booklet at www.cleanwaterhonolulu.com/storm/learning_center/hawaii-backyard.html

USED MOTOR OIL

- A best practice is to have your oil changed by a shop that recycles their waste oil.
- If you change your own oil, use an oil change box. When changing your oil, do it away from storm drains and have old rags around to respond in case of a spill.
- Never use old oil to kill weeds or allow oil to go down a storm drain.

PET WASTE

- Bring a bag, pick it up, and dispose of it properly, in trash.
- Hawaiian Humane Society: www.hawaiianhumane.org/animalaws/index.html

PAINT

- Dispose of small quantities generated at home with regular household rubbish.
- Latex paint can be hardened in the can, then thrown away.
- Oil-based paints must be solidified with an absorbent material, such as shredded paper then sealed in a plastic bag. An oil change box provides the same results.
- Never clean brushes or rinse paint containers near a storm drain.

PESTICIDES AND FERTILIZERS

- Read the product label and use only as directed.
- Never apply fertilizers or pesticides if rain is expected within 24 hours.
- Use fertilizer and pesticides sparingly. Be careful not to spread fertilizer on sidewalks and driveways. They can runoff and pollute waterways. Store under cover, off the ground, to prevent contact with water.
- Use organic fertilizers such as manure, mulch, or compost. Organic fertilizers increase the capacity of the soil to retain water and reduce runoff. The key to good nutrient management in your backyard is a reliable soil test
- Landscape with plants that require less water and few pesticides.

CAR WASH

- Use a commercial car wash that recycles and treats the wastewater.
- When washing your car at home, wash it on your lawn or a pervious surface, so the wash water can soak into the ground and pollutants will be filtered out.
- If you wash your car in a driveway or City street, use water and phosphorous-free soap sparingly with the bucket, sponge, and nozzle on the end of your hose to conserve water and minimize the amount of phosphates entering storm drains, streams and the ocean. Excess phosphates can harm water quality and aquatic life.
- Dispose of the dirty, soapy water in a utility sink, grass or gravel.
- If runoff cannot be kept on your property, direct to the sanitary sewer cleanout (requires City and County of Honolulu permit)
- Charity car washes are allowed with consideration of BMPs.

HAZARDOUS WASTE

- Avoid having household cleaning products become hazardous waste by buying only what you need and using it.
- If unsure about how to dispose of a material, call 768-3201.