



Storm Water Pollution Prevention Tips FACT SHEET 2

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 tanks 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.

YARD WASTE TIPS FOR RESIDENTS



Yard waste clogs storm drains, which increases the risk of flooding. Large collections of yard waste can obstruct water flow. As this organic matter decomposes, it uses up the oxygen needed for aquatic life survival. Decomposing organic matter also creates foul odors.

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



PLANNING AND LANDSCAPING BMPs

1. Prevent soil and debris from leaving your property.
2. Sweep excess dirt and sediment runoff from landscaping or watering from sidewalks and driveways into grassed or planted areas.
3. Consider alternatives to impervious or hard surfaces. If you have a choice, consider more porous surfaces such as brick, gravel, wood chips, stone slab or geotextile materials.
4. If areas must be paved, keep paving to a minimum and direct runoff onto vegetated areas, not onto areas that flow to storm drains.
5. Mulch and plant bare soil as soon as possible. Use sediment barriers when necessary.
6. Plant buffer strips of natural vegetation and woody plants to filter and slow runoff alongside waterways.

YARD WASTE POLLUTION PREVENTION TIPS

1. Clean leaves and trash out of downspouts, roof and street gutters
2. Prevent blowing or hosing grass clippings, leaves, fruits, tree cuttings and other yard waste into street gutters and storm drains
3. Prevent dumping of yard waste in streams or drainage channels
4. Contain and place yard waste at the curb for recycling collection
5. Grasscycle! Leave grass clippings on lawn after mowing. The nitrogen from the clippings acts as a natural fertilizer.
6. Use fallen leaves for mulching. Consider onsite do-it-yourself shredding and mulching as an option.
7. Compost your biodegradable wastes.
8. When using a yard service, be sure they follow these guidelines.
9. Download a copy of the Hawaii Backyard Conservation booklet at http://www.cleanwaterhonolulu.com/storm/learning_center/hawaii-backyard.html

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 marking, 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.honoluluapp.org/ApplicationsForms/SiteEngineeringandSubdivisionPermit>

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) 768-8280

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

LAWS AND ORDINANCES

Revised Ordinances of Honolulu (ROH)

Section 14-12.23 Environmental Quality Control - Violation

- (a) 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.
- (b) It shall be unlawful for any person to discharge or cause to be discharged any storm water runoff associated with industrial activity into any drainage facility which causes a violation of any provision of the city NPDES permit.
- (c) It shall be unlawful to discharge domestic wastewater and industrial wastewater into any drainage facility or any separate storm sewer system. It also shall be unlawful to discharge commercial cooking oil waste and commercial FOG waste, as defined under Section 14-5A.1, into any drainage facility or any separate storm sewer system.
- (d) It shall be unlawful to discharge any storm water on any public right-of-way which creates a drainage problem or causes a nuisance. (Sec. 16-6.23, R.O. 1978 (1987 Supp. to 1983 Ed.); Am. Ord. 92-122, 96-34, 02-14)



Section 14-20.1 Cleaning of sidewalks.

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 area which abuts or adjoins the property owner's property; provided, however, that this requirement shall not apply where maintenance of an abutting sidewalk and gutter may be hazardous to the owner, or where a sidewalk and gutter, although abutting the owner's residential property, are so situated that there is no reasonable access from the property to the sidewalk and gutter. The term "sidewalk" as used herein, shall mean that portion of a street between a curb line or the pavement of a roadway, and the adjacent property line intended for the use of pedestrians, including any setback area acquired by the city for road widening purposes. The term "gutter" as used herein, shall mean that paved portion of a roadway immediately adjacent to the curb or that portion of a roadway in concrete and 12 to 14 inches wide immediately adjacent to the curb. (Sec. 20-4.1, R.O. 1978 (1983 Ed.))

Sec. 41-26.3 Maintenance of streams.

The owner of any stream has the duty to maintain, dredge and clear such stream so that the natural flow of water runs unimpaired. The owner shall also be responsible for the removal of any debris, vegetation, silt or other items or material of any kind, that may interfere with the natural flow of water. (Added by Ord. 89-59)

Sec. 41-26.5 Notice of violation--Order to maintain, clear, and remove.

The chief engineer is authorized and empowered to notify the owner of any stream to maintain and clear any stream, and to remove any debris, vegetation, silt or other items or material of any nature, as is necessary for the proper maintenance of such stream. Such notice shall be as provided for in Section 41-26.12. (Added by Ord. 89-59)

