



# Storm Water Pollution Prevention Tips

## FACT SHEET 6

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**O**ahu 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.**

## HOME IMPROVEMENT TIPS FOR RESIDENTS



Paints, solvents, and other toxic substances used in home improvement projects make their way to the storm drain system, streams, drainage channels and the ocean, usually without treatment to remove pollutants.

### 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.



## HOME IMPROVEMENT POLLUTION PREVENTION TIPS

### HOME CONSTRUCTION WORK, SEDIMENT/LOOSE DIRT

1. Do all home construction work in phases.
2. Schedule grading and excavation projects for dry weather.
3. Seed or mulch to cover bare soil and disturb no more ground than necessary for a project while preserving existing vegetation and managing invasive species.
4. Plant vegetation on slopes and properly maintain your landscaped area. Roots from plants bind loose soil and prevent erosion.
5. Control runoff during construction and divert it from areas of exposed soil. Bank or berm around home construction projects and cover loose dirt to prevent erosion and sediment from clogging streams, and storm drains. Reduce runoff velocities with vegetation or check dams.
6. Protect storm drains close to your construction site against runoff with commercial filters or storm drain inlet protection.
7. Collect and dispose of concrete wash water from construction sites promptly and properly. When clearing concrete trucks and vehicles, use off-site facilities or wash in designated and contained areas only.
8. If loose dirt is left on sidewalks or streets at the end of the day, dispose of it in your yard. Do not sweep into streets, gutters and storm drains that drain to streams, channels, and ultimately the ocean.
9. Keep work areas clean. Clear out waste and litter at the work site daily. Sweep paved surfaces that flow to the storm drain system. Collect and dispose of sweepings properly.
10. Do not throw rock, dirt or concrete in the trash. Deliver to the Waimanalo Gulch Sanitary Landfill (Ewa).
11. If your home has roof gutters and downspouts, you might be able to easily reduce the impact of your roof runoff on the downstream waters in your watershed. Disconnect, if necessary, and redirect your downspout(s) to a discharge location where the water can soak into the ground or install a rain barrel and use the water to reduce your irrigation demands.

### PAINT AND BUILDING MATERIALS

1. Schedule painting projects for dry weather.
2. Never leave paints and building materials unattended in driveways, sidewalks, streets, gutters or next to storm drains.
3. Prior to painting, prep exteriors using methods such as sandblasting or scraping that do not require water. Use tarps and vacuums to collect all waste in sealed bags.
4. If water must be used during the cleaning process, wet vacuum and dispose of wash water into the sanitary sewer system. Any materials and equipment that require water with application and cleaning such as grout, gypsum compound, dry wall mud, plaster, stucco, or concrete cannot be rinsed down a street, into a gutter or storm drain.
5. When possible, use water-based instead of oil-based paints.
6. Never rinse paint brushes in a floor drain, in the street, a driveway or in any area that might flow to the street or into a storm drain.
7. If you use a water-based paint, wash out paintbrushes, pans, sprayers and other equipment in a sink connected to the sewer or over your grass or garden. Use a paint thinner to clean oil-based paints.
8. Have absorbent materials and other cleanup items readily available for spills.
9. If you spill paint, use towels, absorbents or kitty litter immediately to prevent the spill from flowing into the street. If you use kitty litter, be sure to sweep it up and dispose of it in the trash.
10. Latex paints can be hardened in the can, then thrown away. Oil-based paints must be solidified with an absorbent material, such as shredded paper, old rags, or sawdust, then sealed in a plastic bag. An oil change box provides the same results. When thoroughly dry, place the paint can or box on the curb along with your regular trash. Leave the lids off the paint can so the refuse collector can see the paint has hardened.
11. Store paint and building materials under cover with secondary containment.
12. Do not pour paint on the ground or down storm drains. Prevent paint chips from entering the storm drain system.
13. Do not throw liquids in the trash. It may be released from the can when trash is compacted and spill out of the waste collection vehicle onto your street.
14. To empty spray cans, place absorbent material in a plastic bag, spray until can is empty, being careful not to inhale the fumes; leave can in bag, then tie and throw bag away in trash container.
15. Businesses are responsible for all contracted work that takes place on their premises.
16. All discharge routed to the sanitary sewer system requires an Industrial Wastewater Discharge Permit; contact 768-3262 or 768-3263.

## CLEANING SIDEWALKS, DRIVEWAYS, OTHER SURFACES

1. Sweep and/or clean the surface of any visible pollutants and dispose of the collected material in the trash
2. Clean surface oil with rags of absorbents. If using granular absorbent materials (kitty litter), sweep and dispose of before washing.
3. After visible pollutants are removed, use water (i.e., no chemicals) only to clean the area.
4. Direct wash water to landscaped or permeable areas within the property.
5. If the discharge enters the City drainage system, it should be filtered through geotextile filter at the drain inlet. Filter fabric should be changed periodically in order to avoid flooding. Filtered residue and fabric should be disposed of through acceptable means. If the treatment system does not work then the discharge shall be terminated until appropriate treatment system is in place.
6. All discharge routed to the sanitary sewer system requires an Industrial Wastewater Discharge Permit; contact 768-3262 or 768-3263.

## LAWS AND ORDINANCES

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.

The Clean Water Act gave the Environmental Protection Agency 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, 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.honolulu.dpp.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

**Reminder, it is illegal to allow painting and building materials or wash water from the cleaning of painting and building materials, to enter the storm drains system.**