

Household Nonpoint Source Pollution

What is it? What can I do about it?

What is Nonpoint Source Pollution?

Nonpoint source pollution, also known as runoff pollution, comes from diffuse or scattered sources in the environment rather than from a defined outlet such as a pipe. As water moves across and through the land it picks up and carries away natural and human-made pollutants depositing them into lakes, rivers, wetlands, coastal waters, and even our underground sources of drinking water. One potential source of pollutants is our homes.

Major Types of Pollutants Carried by Runoff

- Sediment (from wind and water erosion of soils)
- Nutrients (from fertilizer, animal wastes, septic systems, sewage treatment plants)
- Pathogens (including bacteria and viruses from animal wastes, septic systems, sewage treatment plants)
- Toxic chemicals (for example oil, grease, gasoline, solvents, paint, household cleansers)
- Debris (from construction sites, street litter, household trash)

Potential Pollution Problems: Cleaning paint brushes in the driveway, blowing leaves, grass into street gutters, over applying fertilizers and pesticides on the lawn, salting sidewalks and driveways, oil leaks from vehicles, hosing off sidewalks and driveways, pouring excess chemicals in storm drains, littering, excess fertilizer on sidewalks and driveways, failing to clean up pet waster, and over watering lawns.

What Can I Do About All This?

Yard and Garden

- Apply fertilizers according to soil test recommendations, and in a timely and safe manner
- Clean up litter and yard waste
- Recycle grass clippings
- Use mulches to conserve water and don't over water lawns
- Sweep excess fertilizers and pesticides off sidewalks and driveways back on to the lawn
- Clean up pet wastes

Vehicles

- Use a commercial car wash
- Recycle used oil and antifreeze
- Fix vehicle leaks

Household

- Use environmentally friendly household cleaning products and dispose of household chemicals safely
- Pick up litter and trash
- Don't dump in storm drains

Join a lake watershed council!

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