



# Pollution Solutions FACT SHEET 2

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU  
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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 POLLUTED RUNOFF?

When it rains, water flows over streets and yards carrying the pollutant it picks up into storm drains. This significantly impacts the quality of the water because unlike sanitary sewers, anything dumped into the storm drain system flows directly into the nearest stream or drainage channel without any treatment to remove contaminants. Yard debris clogs storm drains, which increases the risk of flooding. Large collections of yard waste can obstruct water flow and cause streambank erosion.

As this organic matter decomposes, it uses up the oxygen needed for aquatic life survival. Decomposing organic matter also creates foul odors. With more than 20,000 storm drain inlets, and over 670 miles of storm drains to clean and maintain, we need your help.

### WHAT ARE BMPs?

Many simple yet effective methods can be used to help reduce 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. Other can be incorporated into day-to-day activities. The cumulative effect throughout an entire watershed can contribute to improved storm water management.

### 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 Section 14-5A.1.**



## LAWN CARE

### 9 Pollution Tips

#### Actions you can do around your home to make a difference!

1. Keep sidewalks, curbs and gutters clean
2. Prevent soil and debris from leaving your property
3. Gather grass clippings, fallen leaves, fruits, and shrub trimmings, and dispose as green waste, or compost your yard trimmings
4. If you change your own oil, use an oil change box. The best practice is to have your oil changed by a shop that recycles their waste oil.
5. Remove and dispose of pet waste before you leave an area
6. Use water-based paint and discard properly
7. Use fertilizers and pesticides according to the instructions on the label and purchase only what you need. Don't use these products before it rains.
8. Wash your car with plain water or consider washing it on the lawn
9. Keep household cleaning products from becoming hazardous waste

### PLANNING AND LANDSCAPING BMPs

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

### YARD WASTE

- Sweep yard waste such as grass clippings, fallen leaves, fruits, and shrub trimmings and keep them out of the storm drain system. Do not blow or hose yard waste into the catch basin. Trim hedges to property line. Maintain height at least 8' above sidewalk. Call 768-8159 for more information on residential code enforcement.
- Use fallen leaves as mulch or for composting.
- Yard waste is restricted at City disposal sites to no more than 10% per truck-load. Onsite do-it-yourself shredding and mulching is also an option.
- Place green waste at the curb for recycling collection (see twice/month schedules at [www.opala.org](http://www.opala.org) or call your collection yard.).
- Drop off at City Convenience Centers for Refuse and Recycling or take directly to the composting facility, Hawaiian Earth Products.
- Grasscycling or leaving grass clippings on your lawn helps return moisture and nutrients to your lawn. This practice saves labor time and trash bag expenses too.

**Environmental Concern Line 768-3300**  
**Help protect our waters ... for life!**



**D**ischarging 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.

**K**now the law to avoid fines. The Clean Water Act gave the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) the 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 community involvement and targeted enforcement to eliminate or reduce illegal discharge practices. Existing projects such as the storm drain stenciling, Adopt-A-Stream Workshops, World Water Monitoring Day, and Adopt-A-Block cleanup and monitoring programs, provide opportunities to train an interested and committed neighborhood. To volunteer or donate call the Environmental Concern Line at 768-3300.



## 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)

To report illegal discharge that has already occurred, call 768-3300

NPDES permitting questions: 768-3242

Polluted runoff public outreach: 768-3248 (City), 586-4309 (State)

Revised December 2007

[www.cleanwaterhonolulu.com](http://www.cleanwaterhonolulu.com)  
[www.opala.org](http://www.opala.org)

## 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 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."

Section 41-26.5 Notice of Violation - Order to Maintain, Clear and Remove states, "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).

