



Storm Water Pollution
Prevention Tips
FACT SHEET 7

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HOME AND GARDEN

Green waste and household toxics like paints and fertilizers often make their way into the City and County of Honolulu storm drain system and do not get treated before reaching our streams, wetlands and the ocean. This pollutes our drinking water and contaminates waterways, making them unsafe for people and wildlife. Follow these simple tips to prevent pollution and protect your health.

Car Wash

A 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 surfaces, 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. Dispose of leftover soapy water in your bucket into a toilet or sink, not down the storm drain.

Construction Projects

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. Schedule grading and excavation projects for dry weather. Keep construction debris away from the sidewalk, street, gutter and storm drains. Cover excavated material and stockpiles of soil, sand or gravel to protect them from rain, wind and runoff. Sweep or scoop up cement washout or concrete dust instead of hosing into driveways, streets, gutters or storm drains. Do not throw rock, dirt or concrete in the trash. Deliver to the Waimanalo Gulch Sanitary Landfill (Ewa).

Minimize Impervious Areas

Pave only what is needed on your property, use gravel or permeable surfaces such as grass pavers. Green space also provides a natural pollution filtering system.

Fertilizers, Herbicides, Pesticides

Fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides are often carried into the storm drain system by sprinkler runoff. A few tips is all it takes to prevent storm water pollution. Use fertilizer, herbicide and pesticide products sparingly. Follow the instructions, apply only the recommended amount and use only when necessary. Avoid applying near driveways or gutters. Never apply before a rain. Fill in bare dirt areas with grass or mulch to help prevent weeds from returning. Store fertilizer, pesticides and other toxic garden chemicals in a covered area and in sealed, waterproof containers. Call 768-3201 for an appointment to drop off these materials at the hazardous waste handling facility contracted by the City. Use non-toxic products for your garden and lawn whenever possible.

Yard Waste

Instead of blowing or hosing leaves, grass clippings, tree cuttings, fruits and other yard waste into the stream, clogging catch basins and polluting waterways. Use a mulching leaf vacuum as opposed to a leaf blower. Place green waste at the curb for recycling collection (twice/month scheduled at www.opala.org or call your collection yard) or recycle by composting. Mow high and try grasscycling or leaving grass clippings on your lawn instead of using a grass catcher. The clippings act as a natural fertilizer, and because grass is mostly water, it also irrigates your lawn, conserving water.

Household Hazardous Waste

Household products like pesticides and highly flammable substances like gasoline and kerosene are too dangerous to dump and too toxic to trash. These require special handling and should be taken to the City's hazardous waste contractor at one of the quarterly drop-off events. Call 768-3201 for an appointment.

Painting

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 harden in its container and dispose of it in the trash.



Used Motor Oil

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

Pet Waste

Preventing this pollution is as easy as 1-2-3: Bring a bag, pick it up, and dispose of it properly, in the toilet or trash.

Planting In The Yard

Produce less green waste and save water by planting low maintenance, drought-tolerant trees and shrubs; deeper rooted native plants can help bind loose soil and prevent erosion. Using drip irrigation, soaker hoses or micro-spray systems for plants can also help reduce your water bill and prevent runoff. Consider natural landscaping.

Disconnect Your Downspout

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 reduce your irrigation demands.

Preserve Existing Drainage Patterns

If your property has a drainage ditch or swale, do not fill it in. Do not build anything in it and keep it free of debris which may be washed away.

Conserve Water

Irrigate in the early morning or early evening. Use soaker hoses or drip irrigation versus sprinklers. Use organic mulch around plants. Use native plants, when possible, that have lower requirements for water. Sweep as opposed to washing down with a hose.

Get Involved

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 friends. To report illegal discharges or to volunteer for a project to stencil storm drains with the message, "No Dumping, Drains To Ocean" or cleanup a stream, go to www.cleanwaterhonolulu.com, click on "Contact Us".