

A Clean Environment Is Important to All of Us!

Did you know that storm drains are NOT connected to the sanitary sewer system and treatment plant? The primary purpose of storm drains is to carry rainwater away from developed areas to prevent flooding. Untreated storm water and the pollutants it carries flow directly into local waterways and into the ocean.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has determined that nonpoint source pollution is a major cause of our nations water quality problems. Household wastes are a significant source of nonpoint source pollution. Household wastes often enter our waterways via storm drains, negatively impacting water quality by depleting oxygen reserves and contaminating the water. Aquatic plants and animals need sufficient oxygen and clean water to survive. Storm drains should NEVER be used to dispose of household wastes.

The responsibility of improving water quality rests on all of our shoulders. This brochure describes how storm drains are linked to water quality and what you can do to prevent water pollution.



Town of Vernon

Stormwater Management Program

Best Management Practices for Property Owners



Best Management Practices

Storm drains are NOT connected to the sanitary sewer system and treatment plant. The primary purpose of storm drains is to carry rainwater away from developed areas to prevent flooding. Untreated storm water and the pollutants it carries flow directly into local waterways and into the ocean. The following are some of the common pollutants that are found in storm drainage systems, and some solutions to prevent pollution.

- Antifreeze - Antifreeze is primarily composed of ethylene glycol, a sweet and poisonous compound, which can kill or injure pets, birds, fish and other wildlife when carelessly disposed into the environment.
Solution – Repair any leaks in your vehicle’s radiator system. Take used antifreeze to a recycling center.
- Fertilizers – Fertilizers contain large amounts of phosphorous and nitrogen which can cause algal blooms in aquatic areas. These blooms deplete the oxygen in water, resulting in fish kills.
Solution – Sweep and collect any fertilizer from driveways and walkways. Do not wash them into storm drains. Avoid overusing fertilizers. Determine the mineral needs of your soil and apply the necessary amounts. Save unusable fertilizer for a household hazardous waste collection.
- Motor Oil – Motor oil can damage or kill underwater vegetation and aquatic life. Each year in the U. S., do-it-yourself motor oil changers dispose of 192 million gallons of used motor oil into the environment.

Solution – Repair any oil leaks in your vehicle. Put used motor oil into a sealed container and take it to the recycling yard on Talcottville Road. Do not mix motor oil with any other substance.

- Paint – Paint, even latex paint, can contain a variety of hazardous ingredients including lead, mercury, and organic solvents, all of which can impact the environment when disposed of improperly.
Solutions – Never rinse painting equipment where the rinse water can run into the storm drain. Unused paint may be disposed of in the regular trash only after the can has been open long enough for the paint to dry out and solidify.
- Pet Wastes – Pet waste is raw sewage. Allowing it to enter our waterways releases both potentially harmful bacteria and oxygen-consuming materials.
Solutions – Dispose of pet wastes by flushing them down the toilet or by burying them away from any food-growing locations.
- Pesticides – Pesticides contain toxic materials that are harmful to humans, animals, aquatic organisms, and plants. When it rains, these toxic materials can run into storm drains and waterways.

Solutions – Always determine what the pest is and if the pesticide is specific for that pest. If you must use a pesticide, follow the directions carefully. Never apply a pesticide before it rains unless instructed to do so by the label. Never rinse pesticide application equipment where the rinse water can run into the storm drain. Save unused pesticide for a household hazardous waste collection.

- Yard Wastes and erosion – Leaves and grass clippings allow bacteria, oxygen-consuming materials, phosphorus, and nitrogen to be released into our waterways. Yard wastes can also clog storm drains, making them ineffective and causing local flooding. Soil that erodes from your yard increases the sediment load in waterways, blocking sunlight essential for aquatic plants and suffocating animals.
Solutions – Do not allow soil, leaves or grass clippings to accumulate on your driveway, sidewalk or in the street. Leave vegetation on steep slopes to hold soil in place. Mulch and seed exposed soil as soon as possible. Use hay bales to catch sediment that might wash off bare soil areas.