



INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Michael R. Pence, Governor
Karl B. Browning, Commissioner

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Storm water pollution is defined as anything carried by storm water runoff, including litter, sediment, chemicals (such as auto fluids and fertilizer), pet waste, sewage, and yard waste.

Storm water runoff is generated from rainfall or snow melt that, while washing over land, does not filter into the ground. As the runoff flows over the land, streets, parking lots, and rooftops, it accumulates debris, chemicals, sediment and other pollutants that affect water quality.

Runoff is not treated by a wastewater treatment plant. Untreated storm water flows directly into our creeks, rivers and lakes where we swim, fish, boat and draw drinking water. This polluted water affects stream quality and the environment, and reduces how much we can enjoy streams and lakes.

Storm water pollution results in:

- Increased storm water facility maintenance and operation costs
- Increased risk of flooding
- Higher water and sewer bills
- Waters closed for swimming, boating and fishing
- Increased costs for clean water compliance, leading to higher taxes or fees
- Loss of some fish and other aquatic species

Storm Water Pollution Sources

Much of the pollution in our waterways comes from our daily activities in the car, around the home, in the yard, and outdoors. These activities contribute pollutants that are washed into streams when it rains or when snow melts.

- One of the greatest sources of runoff pollution is common roadway litter. Cigarette butts, disposable coffee cups, and candy and food wrappers can be washed into storm water grates, pipes, and channels.
- Litter and waste materials in uncovered trucks or from unsecured truck loads can blow out and onto roadways, where it can be washed into waterways.
- Automotive fluids, including oil, antifreeze, solvents and gasoline that leak from vehicles, are spilled into the environment, or poured down storm drains, are harmful to the environment.
- Pet waste or poorly maintained septic systems, which contribute to nutrient and E. coli pollution.
- Uncovered or bare soil and the resulting soil erosion results in sediment being washed into nearby streams and lakes.
- Over-application and sloppy application of lawn and garden fertilizer leads to chemicals washing from lawns, sidewalks, and streets into storm drains.

What You Can Do

Everyday actions make a big impact on storm water quality. Whether you live in a big city or in a rural area, you can make simple and small changes to improve our water today and for future generations.

- Carry a litter bag in your car and dispose of litter, including cigarette butts, properly

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- Cover truck loads securely
- Keep your car in good working order and dispose of used oil and chemicals safely
- Pick up pet waste; maintain septic tanks
- Reduce soil erosion by replanting or mulching
- Follow fertilizer directions

Remember: If it's on the ground, it's in your water.

Contact Information

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