

STORMWATER EDUCATION

DAKOTA COUNTY *URBANIZED AREA*

A Citizens Guide to Pollution Prevention

WHAT IS STORMWATER RUNOFF?

Stormwater runoff occurs when precipitation from rain or snow melts on paved surfaces like driveways, sidewalks and streets which prevent storm water from naturally soaking into the ground. The storm water and any contaminants are transported through outfalls to the Missouri River or any wetland or natural body of water. The storm water and any contaminants picked up along the way remain untreated and enter these bodies of water that are used by residents for swimming, fishing and sometimes drinking water.



Dirt and oil can cloud the water making it impossible for aquatic plant and algae to grow, therefore depleting the oxygen content of the water—killing off fish and other aquatic organisms. The lack of oxygen in the water allows harmful bacteria and other dangerous pathogens to grow resulting in dangerous health hazards for people and animals who come in contact with the water.

WHY IS STORMWATER RUNOFF A PROBLEM?

Debris, litter and household waste can choke, suffocate or even kill animals that come in contact with it. People can become sick from eating diseased fish and animals that are contaminated as a result of polluted water.

Stormwater can pick up debris, chemicals, dirt and other pollutants and flow into the Missouri River or any wetland or body of water. Anything that enters the storm drain discharges untreated water into our rivers, streams, ponds and lakes. This water is used by our wildlife and people who use it for recreation.

STORMWATER POLLUTION SOLUTIONS

- Sweep up litter and debris from sidewalks, driveways and parking lots—especially around storm drains.
- Report any chemical spill to the Dakota County Emergency Manager and get help to keep the spill from harming the environment. 402.987.2106
- Recycle and properly dispose of household chemicals such as insecticides, pesticides, paint and solvents.
- When walking your dog, pick up waste and dispose of it properly. Flushing pet waste is the best disposal method.
- Excessive fertilizers and pesticides applied to lawns and gardens wash off into our bodies of water. Use recommended amounts.
- Rain Gardens – specially designed areas planted with native plants can provide natural places for rain water to collect and soak into the ground. Rain from rooftops and paved areas can be diverted into these areas instead of storm drains.



AGRICULTURE

Lack of vegetation on stream banks can lead to erosion. Livestock in streams can contaminate waterways with bacteria making the water unsafe for human contact. Overgrazed pastures can also contribute to excessive amounts of sediment being deposited into our bodies of water.

Prevention:

- Plant natural grasses in areas along waterways
- Rotate animal grazing to prevent soil erosion
- Provide livestock with a source of water away from other bodies of water.
- Store and apply manure away from water in accordance with a nutrient management plan.

CONSTRUCTION

Erosion controls that aren't maintained can create major amounts of sediments and debris that can be carried into our stormwater system. Construction vehicles can leak fuel, oil and other fluids that can be picked up by stormwater and deposited into local water bodies.

- Divert stormwater away from construction sites.
- Install silt fences, vehicle mud removal areas, vegetation cover and other sediment and erosion controls and maintain them properly,
- Prevent soil erosion by minimizing disturbed areas during construction projects and seed and mulch bare areas as soon as possible.



AUTOMOTIVE FACILITIES AND CAR WASHES

Uncovered fueling stations allow spills to be washed into storm drains. Cars waiting to be repaired can leak fuel, oil and other harmful fluids that can be picked up by stormwater.

- Clean up spills immediately and dispose of clean-up material properly.
- Install and maintain oil/water separators.
- Properly cover fueling stations.
- Repair leaks and dispose of used auto fluids and batteries at designated drop off or recycling locations.
- Utilize car washes that treat or recycle their wastewater.
- Avoid washing your car in your yard to prevent run-off of chemicals.

