

Water Words

The Ocean Begins at Your Front Door!

Most people believe that the largest source of water pollution in urban areas comes from specific sources such as factories and sewage treatment plants. In fact, the largest source of water pollution comes from city streets, neighborhoods, construction sites, and parking lots.

Because storm-drains are separate from our sewer system, storm water and urban runoff, pollution can flow into the ocean without treatment.



Home Improvement—Water Improvement

By Reducing Urban Runoff at Your Home, You Can Prevent Water Pollution

Concrete, paint, tile, wood, and dirt might be used to improve your home, but it can cause significant damage to our waterways. Any materials that are allowed to leave the project site and deposit on the sidewalk, street, or gutter will end up in the stormdrain system where it will flow directly to our creeks, lakes, and ocean without any treatment. Whether you hire a contractor or prefer to “DIY,” it is important to follow these simple tips while renovating, remodeling or improving your home:

General Construction

- Schedule projects for dry weather.
- Keep all construction debris away from the street, gutter and stormdrain.
- Store materials under cover (overhead covers or plastic sheets) to protect from rainfall, runoff or wind than can carry materials into the street & stormdrain system.

Building Materials

- Never hose materials into a street, gutter or stormdrain.
- Wash concrete mixers and equipment in a designated washout area where the water can flow into a containment area for proper disposal.
- Cut tile and mix cement, stucco, and grout over pervious surfaces or within a containment area to prevent discharges and spills to the street/stormdrain system.
- Recycle broken asphalt, concrete, wood and cleared vegetation.
- Dispose of hazardous materials through a hazardous waste hauler or other means in accordance with the construction permit.

Spills

- Clean up spills immediately by using an absorbent material such as cat litter, then sweep it up and dispose of it properly.
- Immediately report spills that have entered the street, gutter or stormdrain to the City’s 24-Hour Water Pollution Reporting Hotline at (714) 567-6363.

Remember the 3 C’s: Control - Contain – Capture

Did You Know !

As storm water flows over pervious surfaces it picks up the following pollutants:

- Automotive leaks and spills.
- Improperly disposed motor oil and other engine fluids.
- Metals found in vehicle exhaust, weathered paint, rust, metal plating and tires.
- Pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers from lawns, gardens and farms.
- Improperly disposed cleaners, paint and other household chemicals.
- Soil erosion and dust debris from landscape and construction activities.
- Lawn clippings, animal waste and other organic matter.
- Oil stains on parking lots and paved surfaces.
- Litter, including napkins, can pop-tops, bottle caps and cigarette debris.

You can do your part—maintain your vehicle, pick up after your pet, recycle and dispose of your trash in the safest, most environmentally friendly way.

The Human Impact

Surface runoff is a term used to describe when soil is infiltrated to full capacity and excess water, from rain, snowmelt, or other sources flows over the land. This is a major component of the water cycle.

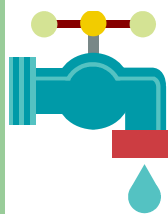


Urbanization increases surface runoff, by creating more impervious surfaces such as pavement and buildings, that do not allow percolation of the water down through the soil to the aquifer. The water is instead forced directly into streams or storm water runoff drains, where erosion and siltation can be major

problems, even when flooding is not. Increased runoff reduces groundwater recharge, thus lowering the water table and making droughts worse, especially for farmers and others who depend on water wells.

Runoff that occurs on surfaces may contain man-made contaminants such as petroleum, pesticides (in particular herbicides and insecticides), or fertilizers. When contaminants are dissolved or suspended in runoff, the human impact is expanded to create water pollution. This pollutant load can reach various receiving waters such as streams, rivers, lakes, estuaries and oceans with resultant water chemistry changes to these water systems. Ultimately these consequences translate into human health risk, ecosystem disturbance and aesthetic impact to water resources.

In Years of Drought, Every Drop Counts



Keeping an eye on your water use is particularly important this year, the driest on record in California. Here are some things you can do:

- Reduce the time in the shower and install a low-flow showerhead that uses only 2.5 gallons per minute.
- Install new toilets that use less than 1.6 gallons per flush.
- Replace your old washing machine with a new, high efficiency model, saving 20 to 30 gallons of water per load.
- Water outdoor plants early or late in the day to reduce evaporation.
- Mulch around plants to hold water in the soil.
- Install water saving faucet aerators in your kitchen and bathrooms.
- Use an automatic shut off nozzle on your hose.
- Use a broom, not a hose.