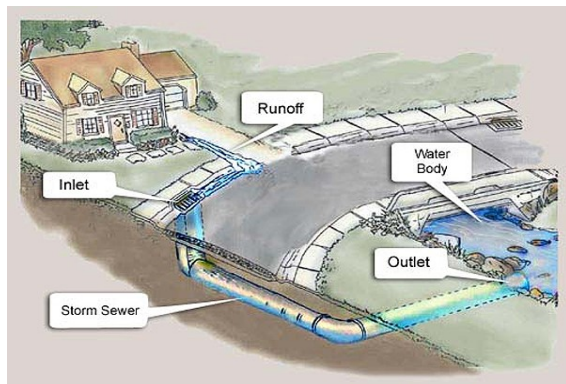


## WHAT IS STORMWATER RUNOFF?

Stormwater runoff is the rain that flows off streets, parking lots, rooftops and lawns. Stormwater is collected by storm drains and drainage ditches and flows into the nearest waterbody.



## WHY IS STORMWATER RUNOFF A PROBLEM?

The most obvious problem is flooding caused by heavy rains. Additionally, stormwater runoff picks up pollutants and debris as it flows across rooftops and lawns, streets and parking lots. When it rains, these pollutants wash directly into our streams, wetlands and lakes. Some of these pollutants include oil and grease, harmful bacteria, fertilizers, toxic chemicals and other contaminants that are harmful to both people and aquatic life. A common misconception is the water running off street and into a storm drain goes to a wastewater treatment plant. It does not. In fact, stormwater typically receives no treatment.

## WHY SHOULD I CARE ABOUT STORMWATER?

Contaminated or polluted stormwater can lead to significant water quality problems.

- Excess nutrients cause algae blooms. Oxygen levels are depleted when the algae die and decompose. Fish and other aquatic organisms can't live when oxygen levels decrease.
- Sediment clouds the water—making it difficult for aquatic plants to grow and destroying aquatic habitats.
- Bacteria and other pathogens (commonly found in fecal waste) discharged in swimming areas create health hazards and cause beach closings.
- Debris washed into the water can choke, suffocate or disable aquatic life (ducks, fish, turtles and birds).
- Household hazardous wastes (insecticides, pesticides, paint, and auto fluids) can poison aquatic life.
- Polluted stormwater often affects drinking water sources—human health is at risk and water treatment costs rise.

As our community grows, so must our commitment to protecting and improving the quality of our water resources. Assets such as the area lakes and wetlands help make Alexandria one of the most livable communities. Keeping our water resources clean and useable is in everyone's interest.

## WHERE CAN I FIND INFORMATION OR GUIDANCE?

CITY OF ALEXANDRIA <https://alexandriamn.city>

### State and Regional Resources:

<https://www.pca.state.mn.us/water/stormwater>

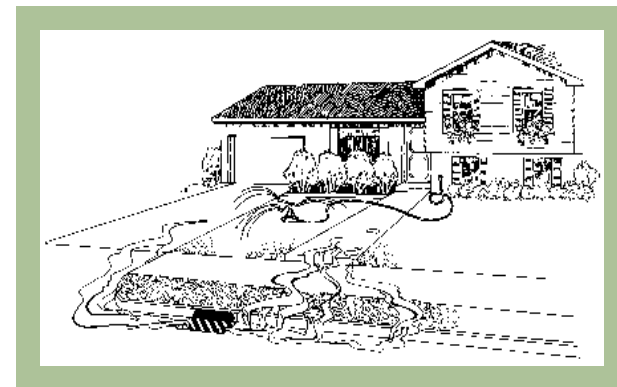
<https://www.epa.gov/mn>



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# RESIDENT'S GUIDE TO STORMWATER

## Common Questions and Answers Regarding Stormwater Runoff



This brochure is brought to you as a part of the Alexandria Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). To review a copy of the SWPPP please contact the City (information on back).

## WHY MUST THE CITY MANAGE STORMWATER QUALITY?

Mandated by Congress under the EPA's Clean Water Act, the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Stormwater Program is a comprehensive national program for addressing polluted storm water runoff. The stormwater rules recognize that stormwater generated from one area often becomes drinking water for a downstream community. Alexandria is regulated under that program and must develop and follow a storm water quality management plan to operate its storm sewer system. The plan is based on six different types of activities:

- **Public Education/Outreach**
- **Public Participation/Involvement**
- **Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination**
- **Construction Site Runoff Control**
- **Post-Construction Storm Water Management**
- **Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping**

## WHAT IS ALEXANDRIA DOING TO IMPROVE OUR STORMWATER QUALITY?

Alexandria has a stormwater infrastructure of curb, gutter, ditches and piping that transports stormwater. This infrastructure or utility is guided by a Stormwater Management Committee (SMC). Ongoing City efforts include (but are not limited to) street sweeping, cleaning catch basins, controlling construction site erosion, inspecting the storm sewer system to find and eliminate pollution sources and distributing education materials to the public.

## TEN EASY WAYS YOU CAN STOP STORM WATER POLLUTION

REMEMBER, WATER POLLUTION IS EVERYONE'S CONCERN.



- 1 Recycle your used motor oil. Take household hazardous wastes to drop-off points. Use a proper container for your trash and recyclables. Do not put trash into the street or gutter where it can be washed into the storm sewer system. *Never pour hazardous materials into a storm drain.*
- 2 Properly manage and dispose of yard wastes (grass clippings, leaves, etc.) and do not put them in the street, gutter, ditch or storm drain. Aerate your lawn. Where possible, direct runoff into vegetated areas. Install a "rain barrel" or "rain garden".
- 3 Limit the amount of impervious surface on your property. Use porous paving surfaces such as wood decking and pavement/block that allows water to soak into the ground.
- 4 Always follow the manufacturer's instructions when using pesticides, herbicides or fertilizers on your lawn or garden. Use phosphorus-free fertilizer.
- 5 If you have a dog, clean up its waste and do not allow it to pollute storm water runoff. You can properly dispose of pet waste by flushing it down the toilet or placing it in the trash for regular pickup.
- 6 Use water-based paints such as latex and wash paint brushes in the sink with water. When using paint thinner, reuse and recycle it.
- 7 Regularly maintain your car and fix any oil, radiator or transmission leaks as soon as you see them. Also, consider using a commercial car wash instead of washing at home. The runoff from home car washing can contain detergents that are harmful to aquatic life.
- 8 Use non-toxic alternatives to conventional household cleaners whenever possible.
- 9 Educate your family, friends and neighbors about storm water pollution. Spread the word.
- 10 If you see a potential stormwater quality problem or violation, please call the City of Alexandria at 320-763-6678.