

UNDERSTANDING STORMWATER

What Is Stormwater Runoff?

Stormwater runoff occurs when precipitation from rain or snowmelt flows over the ground. Impervious surfaces like driveways, sidewalks and streets prevent stormwater from naturally soaking into the ground.

Why Be Concerned With Stormwater Runoff?

Stormwater can pick up debris, chemicals, dirt, and other pollutants, which then flow into the storm sewer system. Anything entering a storm sewer in Edgewater is discharged untreated into Sloan Lake and the Platte River. People use this water for swimming, fishing, agricultural uses and providing drinking water.

THE EFFECTS OF POLLUTION

Polluted stormwater runoff can have many adverse effects on plants, fish, animals and people.

Sediment can cloud the water and make it difficult or impossible for aquatic plants to grow. Sediment also can destroy aquatic habitats.

Excess nutrients can cause algae blooms. When algae die, they sink to the bottom and decompose in a process that removes oxygen from the water. Fish and other aquatic organisms can't exist in water with low dissolved oxygen levels.

Bacteria and other pathogens can wash into swimming areas and create health hazards.

Debris, plastic bags, six pack rings, bottles, cigarette butts and yard waste washed into waterbodies can cause flooding, dump debris on neighboring lands and choke, suffocate, or disable aquatic life.

Household hazardous wastes such as pesticides, paint, solvents, used motor oil and other auto fluids can poison aquatic life. Land animals and people can become sick or die from eating diseased fish and shellfish or ingesting polluted water.

Polluted stormwater often affects drinking water sources. This, in turn, can affect human health and increase drinking water treatment costs.

BUSINESS STORMWATER POLLUTION SOLUTIONS

COMMERCIAL AREAS

Dirt ,oil, and debris that collect in parking lots and paved areas can be washed into the storm sewer collection system and enter local waterbodies

- Sweep up litter and debris from sidewalks, driveways and parking lots, especially around storm drains
- Cover grease storage bins and dumpsters and keep them clean.
- Report any chemical spill to the local hazardous waste cleanup team. They will know the best way to keep spills from harming the environment.
- When employees or contractors are pressure washing outside, make sure all soapy or dirty wash water is collected and disposed of inside the facility to the sanitary sewer so it will be treated.

AUTOMOTIVE FACILITIES

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 properly dispose of the cleanup materials.
- Provide cover over fueling stations and design or retrofit facilities for spill containment.
- Properly maintain fleet vehicles to prevent oil, gas , and other discharges from being washed into the stormsewer.

CONSTRUCTION SITES

Erosion controls that are not maintained can cause excessive amounts of sediment and debris to be carried into the stormwater system. Construction vehicles can leak fuel, oil, and other harmful fluids that can be picked up by stormwater and deposited into local waterbodies.

- Divert stormwater away from disturbed or exposed areas of the construction site.
- Install silt fences, vehicle mud removal areas, vegetative cover, and other sediment and erosion controls and properly maintain them, especially after rainstorms.
- Prevent soil erosion by minimizing disturbed areas during construction projects, and seed and mulch bare areas as soon as possible.
- Wash out concrete equipment and trucks offsite or to a designated area where wash water will flow onto dirt or into a temporary pit in a dirt area – not into a storm drain. Let the water seep into the soil and dispose of the hardened concrete with trash.