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# Make Your Business the Solution to Stormwater Pollution

Northern Middlesex  
**STORMWATER  
COLLABORATIVE**

## Be part of the solution to protecting our local waterways from pollution.



When it rains, stormwater flows from rooftops, driveways, lawns, sidewalks, roads, and parking lots into the storm sewer system. Along the way, stormwater picks up soil, chemicals, bacteria, litter and other pollutants. In most neighborhoods, the stormwater system discharges this polluted runoff directly to the nearest waterway with no treatment. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, polluted stormwater is the greatest threat to our nation's clean water.

However, you can prevent stormwater pollution by practicing green business habits that keep automotive fluids, trash, detergents, pesticides, fertilizers, grass clippings, and other pollutants out of the storm drain. **Only rain down the drain!**

### Winter Weather Care:



- Use de-icing salt and sand sparingly; too much can harm groundwater, surface water, and wetlands.

- State law requires property owners to remove snow and ice, but Massachusetts only requires landowners to exercise "reasonable care" in preventing dangerous conditions. See

[http://www.bostonbar.org/pub/bbj/bbj\\_online/bbj1011/winter2011/Case\\_FocusWin11.pdf](http://www.bostonbar.org/pub/bbj/bbj_online/bbj1011/winter2011/Case_FocusWin11.pdf).

- Sweep up excess salt and sand to keep it out of waterways.
- Store de-icing materials under cover, and away from storm drains.

### Cars:

- Use a commercial car wash for your fleet. Avoid hosting a car wash fund raiser, but if you do, require minimal, phosphorous-free detergent is used, and wash on vegetated areas to keep wash water out of the storm drain. Check out this DCR brochure with tips for car wash fund raisers: <https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2017/09/29/car%20war.pdf>.
- Check your cars for leaks and make repairs as soon as possible. Clean up spilled fluids with an absorbent material like kitty litter or sand and dispose of it in the trash. **Never rinse a spill into a storm drain.**
- Recycle used oil and other automotive fluids at approved locations. NEVER dump these liquids down the storm drain or in the trash.



### Parking Lots:

- Sweep your parking lot to remove debris, chemicals, and leaves. Do not hose down paved areas!
- Check parking lot for signs of automotive leaks/spills. Clean up spilled fluids with an absorbent material like kitty litter or sand and dispose of it in the trash. **Never rinse a spill into a storm drain.**
- Reduce stormwater flowing from your property by letting it soak in to the ground in a rain garden, vegetated filter strip, or other Best Management Practice (BMP). To learn about stormwater BMPs to infiltrate stormwater at your property, including approximate costs, see Appendix A and B in [http://www.bwsc.org/sites/default/files/2019-01/stormwater\\_bmp\\_guidance\\_2013.pdf](http://www.bwsc.org/sites/default/files/2019-01/stormwater_bmp_guidance_2013.pdf).



### Dumpsters:

- Schedule regular waste pick-ups and keep dumpster areas free from litter, debris, and sediments.
- Keep dumpsters and waste bins covered. Anything in an uncovered dumpster or trash bin is vulnerable to the weather, and can wash into nearby storm drains during wet weather.
- Check dumpsters regularly for leaks, and replace if necessary. Never wash dumpsters with a hose.



## Building Maintenance & Materials Storage:



- Use hazardous substances like paints, solvents, and cleaners sparingly and follow the directions on the label.

- All chemical cleaners, road salt, fertilizers, pesticides, and gas and oil for machinery, should be stored

in appropriate containers that don't leak.

- Any excess chemical spills should be swept up immediately.
- Don't pour wash water or chemicals down a storm drain.
- Dispose of wash water down a sanitary sewer (sink or toilet).
- Store substances properly to avoid leaks and spills.
- Whenever possible buy and use nontoxic, water-based, biodegradable, recycled, and/or recyclable products.
- Tell your contractors to **NEVER** rinse paint cans or equipment into storm drains! This wastewater goes untreated, right into nearby waterways.
- Dispose of hazardous wastes as required by Federal and state regulations.

## Pet Care:

- Pet waste can contain bacteria and parasites, which are public health threats, leading to:

- ✗ *Campylobacteriosis*: Bacterial infection causing diarrhea.
- ✗ *Giardiasis*: Protozoan infection causing diarrhea, cramping, fatigue, and weight loss.
- ✗ *Salmonellosis*: Bacterial infection causing fever, body aches, vomiting, and diarrhea.
- ✗ *Toxocariasis*: A parasitic infection caused by roundworms found in the feces of dogs. Symptoms include vision loss, rash, fever or cough, and is a particular threat to children exposed to parasite eggs in sand and soil.
- Pet waste also causes harmful algal and bacterial blooms - like toxic blue-green algae - and aquatic weeds to grow. This growth reduces oxygen in the water for fish and other wildlife, causing fish kills.
- **Pick up pet waste and dispose of it properly** by placing it in the trash, or flushing it down the toilet (not including the bag!). Leaving pet waste on the ground allows it to wash into our rivers and lakes.
- Do not throw pet waste into a storm drain (in or out of a bag!). It will end up untreated in a nearby wetland or waterway.



## Landscaped Areas:



- Ensure landscape contractors are properly disposing of landscape waste. Encourage mulching grass clippings and leaves, and to never dump waste into the wetlands; this harms water quality.
- Phosphorus and nitrogen (found in fertilizers) and pesticides are harmful. Tell your contractor to protect water quality by using pesticides and fertilizers sparingly or not at all; and to spot treat trouble areas with pesticides, but never use pesticides near wetlands or water.
- **It's state law to use only zero phosphorus fertilizer** (the middle number: 12-**0**-15). Phosphorus-containing fertilizer may only be used when a soil test says it's needed, or once in the 1<sup>st</sup> year of a new lawn.
- By state law, **fertilizer may not generally be used within 20' of wetlands or waterbodies, or 100' of a surface water sources for public drinking water supply**. Remember to sweep up the driveway and sidewalk to insure none enters the storm drain.
- Use rain barrels to collect the runoff from your roof for reuse in your gardens or landscaping.
- Before you begin to irrigate, keep in mind that just one inch of water per week from rain/irrigation is enough to keep a lawn green. The best time to water is early morning.
- To avoid water loss, evaporation, and runoff: avoid irrigating when it's windy, and make sure that sprinkler heads are pointed at the lawn and not the pavement - adjust and fix heads as necessary.

## For More Information & Becoming Involved:

- To learn more ways for reducing stormwater pollution in in your area, visit the Northern Middlesex Stormwater Collaborative (NMSC) at [www.nmstormwater.org](http://www.nmstormwater.org).
- You can also follow the NMSC on Facebook, and Twitter @NMStormwater.
- For information about what TOWN NAME is doing to protect water quality, and learn about upcoming events visit [TOWN'S WEBSITE](#).

Special thanks to [Larry the H2O Hero](#) (Stormwater Coalition of Monroe County, NY) for the brochure on which this publication was based. Visit him at [www.H2OHero.org](http://www.H2OHero.org).