

As stormwater flows

over driveways, lawns, and sidewalks, it picks up debris, chemicals, dirt and other pollutants. Stormwater flows into storm sewer systems or directly to a pond, lake, stream, river or wetland.

Anything that enters a storm sewer system is discharged untreated into the same waterbodies we use for swimming, fishing, and providing drinking water. Polluted runoff is the nation's greatest threat to clean water.

By practicing healthy household habits, homeowners can keep common pollutants like pesticides,

pet waste,

grass clippings, and automotive fluids off the ground and out of stormwater.

Pet waste contains potentially harmful bacteria, viruses and parasites that can cause illness in people and animals.

Adopt these healthy household habits, and help protect our valuable water resources. Remember to share these good habits with your friends and neighbors!



Additional Resources

Visit the Green Country Stormwater Alliance web site listed below for more information about proper handling and disposal of pet waste.



Green Country Stormwater Alliance
www.stormwaterok.net

Contact Information:

For information about the Green Country Stormwater Alliance, contact INCOG at 918-584-7526 or by email at stormwater@incog.org. For local information, contact your city or county stormwater coordinator.

For more information about stormwater protection, contact the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Water Quality Division at 405-702-8100 or visit the DEQ web site at www.deq.state.ok.us/WQDnew/stormwater/index.html

For stormwater related complaints, call the DEQ statewide hotline at 1-800-522-0206. This number is answered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Citizens may fill out an online complaint form at the DEQ web site at www.deq.state.ok.us/ECLsnew/Complaints/onlncmpl.htm and submit it electronically to the DEQ. The site also provides contact links to DEQ.

For more information about household pollutant disposal options, visit the Met website at www.metrecycle.com or call 918-584-0584.

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A Pet Owner's Guide to Protecting Our Water





A Closer Look at

The Impacts of Pet Waste

Responsible Pet Ownership

Let's face it, your friendly pooch can produce a lot of waste over the course of a week or month. Having several pets multiplies the problem. There are common misconceptions about pet waste that need to be reconsidered: "pet waste is good fertilizer" or "it's natural so what's the harm?" Both of these are false.

Pet Waste

All animal waste contains bacteria, viruses and parasites that are harmful to people and animals. Decomposing pet waste causes polluted runoff that lowers water quality in our streams. The bacteria and parasites in pet waste can cause illness in humans if the contaminated water comes in contact with an open wound or is ingested, even by splashing.

The nutrients washed to local waterbodies from pet waste can cause excess algae growth which is unsightly and leads to low dissolved oxygen. Pet waste nutrients can also cause growth of noxious organisms which can harm fish.

What Can You Do? When walking your pet in a park or street, use a plastic bag or pooper scooper to pick up your pet's waste. You can flush it down the toilet, bury it in the yard, or bag it and put it in the trash (if local codes allow).

Composting pet waste is ineffective because the compost pile does not have high enough temperatures to kill harmful organisms. Also, never use pet waste to fertilize food plants or gardens.

Pet Bathing

Pet bath water can contain pollutants. Bathe pets indoors in a bathtub or sink using less toxic shampoos, or consider having your pet professionally groomed. Pet shampoos and soaps, even when biodegradable, can have toxic chemicals. Consider using less toxic alternatives such as oral or topical flea control products. If you do use flea control products such as shampoos, sprays or collars, dispose of unwanted quantities properly.

Flea Dip Disposal

Do not pour flea dip solutions onto driveways or into the street. Liquids on hard surfaces will likely enter the storm drainage system and flow to a nearby creek. Flea dips usually contain an insecticide that can harm aquatic life.

If you are applying an insecticide to your lawn for flea control, avoid rainfall runoff. Rain can wash the insecticide off your lawn into the storm drainage system which flows directly to local creeks.

Solutions containing **pyrethrins** and **organophosphate** chemicals such as Dursban, Diazinon or Malathion cannot be disposed of in the sanitary sewer. It is best to take unused chemicals to a local household pollutant collection event.

Do not pour dipping solutions and insecticides on the ground, down sink drains or into storm drains. Use local household pollutant collection facilities and events.

Pet Waste FAQs

Q. I don't walk my dog near a creek or river. How does my dog's waste get there?

A. *When it rains, pet waste and other pollutants (solvents, oils, etc.) are carried into the storm drains which discharge into local waterways.*

Q. Why doesn't the sewage treatment plant clean this water before it reaches the river?

A. *Sewage treatment plants only process waste water from indoor plumbing. Sewage treatment plants do not treat rain water.*

Q. Other animals such as squirrels, rabbits and birds already "use the facilities" outdoors as their bathroom. Why should I worry about my pet?

A. *Pet populations are concentrated in urban areas. The waste from all these pets is not adequately or naturally absorbed into the environment.*

Q. Should I pick up the pet waste in my own yard?

A. *Yes, definitely. During a rain storm pet waste contaminants get washed out of your yard and into the storm water collection system causing pollution in local streams. When pet waste is not removed, it leaves a large quantity of nutrients that can burn out grasses by overfeeding them, creating a spotty looking yard. Pet waste can also attract rats and other vermin.*