

Stormwater Management

What is stormwater?

Any rain that falls on the roof of buildings, and runs off hard surfaces such as roads, driveways, bike paths and car parks is called stormwater.

During the Dry season, grease, oils, dust, leaves and rubbish build up around buildings and houses, on the roads, and in drains. Rainwater collects these pollutants and washes them into stormwater drains which flow into our waterways (creeks, rivers, harbours, wetlands, sea, etc.)

Polluted stormwater can harm our environment

Common pollutants include rubbish, leaves, garden clippings, oils, grease, paints, chemicals, fertilisers, pesticides, detergents and animal wastes.

When pollutants enter stormwater drains they have the potential to upset the delicate ecological balance of our waterways. Even grass cuttings, leaves and soil can create problems for our waterways by introducing nutrients that encourage weed growth and clog up the waterway.

Too much pollution enters the creeks, rivers and sea through carelessness and ignorance. The best solution lies in preventing pollutants entering stormwater drains.

Here is how you can help reduce the pollution of our waterways -

- Recycle engine oil, paints and chemicals by placing them in sealed containers for disposal at an approved site;
- Place rubbish in your bin and use garden clippings to make a compost;
- Minimise the use of garden chemicals by following instructions for the use of fertilisers and pesticides to maintain lawns and gardens without polluting the water;
- Avoid over watering your gardens and lawns;
- Don't hose or sweep driveway rubbish into the street;
- Bury or bag and dispose of animal waste to prevent it from being washed into stormwater drains;
- Wash your car on the lawn to help filter out the detergents;
- Prevent stockpiles of soil, grass clippings and leaves from washing away during storms by constructing make-shift barriers around them, using bricks or a tarpaulin for example;
- Ensure that hard surfaces drain into surrounding vegetation, and remember that increasing paved areas on your property will increase stormwater runoff.

ENVIRONMENTALLY HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES SHOULD NOT BE DISPOSED OF INTO STORMWATER DRAINS. THE NT WATER ACT 1992 SPECIFICALLY PROHIBITS THE DISCHARGE OF POLLUTING WASTES TO WATERWAYS WHICH INCLUDES WATER FROM STORMWATER DRAINS.

On the streets and near waterways

- Don't litter;
- Keep a note of emergency numbers to report pollution incidents such as oil and chemical spills;
- Don't dump garden clippings on the banks of waterways;
- Remember vegetation is important to hold the soil and help filter out contaminants from polluted stormwater;
- Support waterway protection and rehabilitation programs such as Waterwatch, Coastcare, Greening Australia and Landcare.

In Business and Industry

- Ensure the correct storage and disposal of wastes;
- Protect storage tanks with a runoff control barrier capable of containing a spill resulting from a tank rupture;
- Regularly inspect and maintain equipment to avoid accidental leaks, spills etc.
- Re-think your wash down and clean up procedures;
- Try to keep stormwater away from potential pollutants by covering them or install drainage works to divert stormwater away from them;
- Use "grass and block" techniques for car parks and paved surfaces to reduce the amount of runoff;
- Implement an environmental incident reporting system which requires all staff to report and record all incidents and ensure that correct procedures are followed in the event of spills, discharges of complaints;
- Ensure that there are no illegal connections to stormwater drains of the sewer.

For More Information

Water Quality of Stormwater

Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport
Telephone: (08) 89 994538

Domestic Waste Disposal and Recycling

For Domestic Waste and Recycling contact your local Council.

Discharge of wastes to sewer
Power Water
Telephone: 1800 245 091

Waste Management and Pollution Control

Environment Operations
Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport
Telephone (08) 89 244137

Disposal of Dangerous Goods

NT Work Safe
Telephone 1800 019 115

