

Storm Water Pollution Prevention Clean Water: Our Only Choice

The City of Columbus has two drainage systems – the sanitary sewers and the storm sewers. The storm drain system was designed to prevent flooding by carrying excess rainwater away from streets, homes, and businesses. Because the system contains no filters, it also serves the unintended function of carrying urban pollution straight into our channels and eventually the Loup River.

This pamphlet provides examples of how you can reduce or eliminate pollution from entering our streams from “storm water” or “urban runoff”.

Rain, industrial and household water mixed with urban pollutants creates storm water pollution. The pollutants include: oil and other automobile fluids, paint and construction debris, yard and pet wastes, pesticides and litter.

Urban runoff pollution eventually flows to the Loup River through the storm drain system that takes water and debris straight from the streets to our streams. Each day tremendous amounts of polluted urban runoff enter our streams untreated, leaving toxic chemicals in our channels and river and tons of trash along their banks.

Urban runoff contaminates our streams and rivers, harms aquatic life and increases the risk of flooding by clogging our storm drains and catch basins. Overall, storm water pollution costs us thousands of dollars per year.

These Best Management Practices (BMPs) will help reduce storm water runoff pollution and ensure cleaner streams and rivers, and a cleaner City of Columbus. For more storm water information, call the Storm Water Manager at 402-562-4237

Hazardous Spill Response
City of Columbus Fire Dept.
911 or (402) 564-8127

To Report Illegal Dumping
City of Columbus
(402) 562-4237

To Report a Drainage Problem
Department of Public Works
(402) 562-4286

Storm Water Program Information
City of Columbus Engineering Department
(402)562-4237
Material printed by City of Columbus
Engineering Department



For more information or assistance, call or write
City of Columbus
Engineering Department
2424 14th Street
Columbus, NE 68604
402-562-4236
www.columbusne.us

STORMWATER MANAGER
2424 14TH STREET
COLUMBUS, NE 68601

The City of
Columbus

Storm Water Best Management Practices (BMPs)



Automotive Maintenance & Car Care

Gas Stations
Auto Repair Shops
Auto Body Shops
Car Dealerships
Mobile Fleet Managers
Mobile Fleet Washing Businesses

Car Maintenance Problems

Many common car maintenance routines contribute to storm water pollution. Washing the car or pouring used motor oil into a street gutter or storm drain pollutes our streams and eventually the Loup River.

Water runoff from streets, parking lots and driveways picks up oil and grease dripped from cars, asbestos worn from brake linings, zinc from tires and organic compounds and metals from spilled fuels. These chemicals eventually drain into the Loup River and its tributaries, harming the fish and aquatic life.

Oil and grease, for example, clog fish gills and block oxygen from entering the water. If oxygen levels in the water become too low, aquatic animals die.

Solutions

Best Management Practices (BMPs) such as handling, storing and disposing of materials properly can prevent pollutants from entering our storm drains.

1. Cleaning Work Sites

Don't hose down your shop floor. It is best to sweep it regularly.

Use non-toxic cleaning products. Baking soda paste works well on battery heads, cable clamps and chrome; mix soda with a mild biodegradable dish-washing soap for wheels and tires; for windows, mix white vinegar or lemon juice with water.

2. Spills

Prepare and use easy to find spill containment and cleanup kits. Include safety equipment and cleanup materials appropriate to the type and quantity of materials that could spill.

For small spills, pour kitty litter, sawdust or cornmeal on spills to bind liquids. For information on proper disposal, contact Keep Columbus Beautiful at (402)533-9223 or the City of Columbus Transfer Station at (402) 562-4254.

3. Fluids

Your customer's regular car maintenance prevents fluids from leaking onto streets and washing into storm drains. It's also good for business.

Change fluids carefully. Use a drip pan to avoid spills.

Prevent fluid leaks from stored vehicles. Drain fluids such as unused gas, transmission and hydraulic oil, brake and radiator fluid from vehicles or parts kept in storage.

Implement simple work practices to reduce the chance of spills. Use a funnel when pouring liquids (like lubricants or motor oil) and place a tray underneath to catch spills. Place drip pans under the spouts of liquid storage containers. Clean up spills immediately.

4. Washing Vehicles

Prevent oil and grease, suspended solids and toxins from washing into the storm drains.

Designate a washing site where water drains to the sanitary sewer system. The area must be paved and well marked as a wash area. Post signs prohibiting oil changes and washing with solvents. Train all employees to use the designated area.

Wash vehicles with biodegradable, phosphate-free detergent. Use a bucket (not a running hose) to wash and rinse the car and conserve water.

5. Fueling Vehicles

Gas and diesel spills are common when fueling vehicles.



Design fuel areas so that all spills are contained and runoff cannot carry spills into storm drains. Slope the containment area toward drains connected to the sanitary sewer system. Equip the drain with a shutoff valve in the event of a large spill.

Cover the fueling area to keep rain from washing away spilled materials. Extend the cover several feet beyond the containment area.

Keep absorbent materials on site to allow prompt cleanup of spills.

Post signs instructing people not to overfill gas tanks. Overfilling causes spills and vents gas fumes to the air.

6. Recycle

Recycle what you can:

- ◇ Metal Scraps
- ◇ Used Tires
- ◇ Aluminum
- ◇ Used Oils
- ◇ Water-based Paints
- ◇ Paper and Cardboard
- ◇ Antifreeze

Check the Keep Columbus Beautiful website:

www.kcbne.com

under "Reduce/Reuse/Recycle" to locate a recycling facility for your particular product.

7. Employee and Customer Education

Educate your employees. Include water quality training in new-employee orientations and conduct annual review sessions. Contact the City of Columbus Storm Water Coordinator if you need assistance.

Educate your customers. Raise both employee and customer awareness by stenciling storm drains near the work place with the Storm Water Program Stencil or placard — "NO DUMPING — DRAINS TO RIVER."

