

POLLUTED STORMWATER RUNOFF

Factsheet for Automotive Businesses



After it rains, water flows off our yards, streets, parking lots, and driveways into the storm drains, and eventually into our streams, lakes, and bays. Unfortunately, this runoff picks up pollutants that flow directly into our local waterways. These pollutants can include soil, motor oil, pesticides, fertilizers, pet waste, and litter. Many people mistakenly think that the water entering from our storm drains is cleaned or treated in some way. On the contrary, our storm drain systems channel water directly into our creeks. If our runoff water and stormwater is contaminated, it can become a major source of water pollution. This factsheet series is broken into seven different user groups who can help prevent stormwater from becoming polluted.

Builders/Developers

Gardeners/Homeowners

Automotive Businesses

Restaurants

Car Owners

Pet Owners

Pool Owners



FACTSHEET FOR AUTOMOTIVE BUSINESSES

Polluted Stormwater Runoff

Automotive fluids like motor oil, fuel, oil filters, antifreeze, transmission fluids, and degreasers are all toxic and hazardous to the environment. Naturally, we don't want them entering our local waterways. Here are some small, simple action steps that you, as an automotive business, can take.

Develop a policy on pollution prevention for everyone to follow. Management can provide direction and support for pollution prevention by reviewing this policy with all employees and keeping the policy posted.

Keep a spill response plan on site and posted at all times. This should include the action steps to be taken, in addition to important spill response contact information. In the State of Delaware, these numbers include the DNREC Emergency Response Team at 1-800-662-8802 and DNREC's Solid and Hazardous Waste Management Branch at (302) 739-9403.

Keep rags, damp mops, and absorbent pads readily accessible. Dispose of waste properly.

Train employees, as a team, to prevent runoff and stormwater pollution. It can only work if both employees and management are committed to the task. Employees should be trained in pollution prevention techniques, hazardous materials handling and storage, and spill response. Provide the resources to get the job done and encourage participation through incentive programs such as awards, bonuses, and other forms of recognition. Management should explain the environmental concerns, health and safety consequences of spills, and the benefits of good management and housekeeping practices.

Cover fluid storage areas and be sure to secure and lock them.

Never hose garage floors or driveways into the storm drain system. First, sweep regularly, then contain wash water and properly dispose of it.

Recycle and reuse cleaning fluids, oil, and oil filters where practical.

Label storm drains to remind employees that the outlets discharge to a local waterway.

Never pour liquids or dry materials down a storm drain.

Remind customers to check their vehicles for leaks regularly.

For "Do-It-Yourselfers"

1. Make sure you have protected the sidewalk or driveway from repair fluids by using a drip pan. Never allow any fluids to go into the gutter.
2. When changing your motor oil, recycle it at the nearest used oil collection center.
3. Avoid accidental spills by using a drip pan or collection container.
4. Never mix automotive fluids together. Keep them in separate containers with closed, sealed lids. Label.
5. Never hose down your garage floor, driveway, sidewalk, or gutter. Instead, sweep it regularly.
6. Keep automotive fluids away from children and pets and out of contact with water.