

Carrollton Environmental Services
THE STORMWATER READER

December 2015

STORMWATER POLLUTION

What is stormwater runoff?

Stormwater runoff is rain or snowmelt that flows over the ground. Impervious surfaces like driveways, sidewalks, parking lots, and streets prevent stormwater from naturally soaking into the ground.

Why is runoff a problem?

Stormwater runoff can pick up debris, chemicals, dirt, and other pollutants and deposits them into the storm drain system or directly into our ponds, creeks, lakes and rivers. Anything that enters a storm drain system is discharged untreated into the water we use for fishing, swimming and drinking.

The effects of pollution.

Polluted stormwater runoff can have many adverse effects on plants, fish, animals and people.

- Sediment can cloud the water and make it difficult or impossible for aquatic life to grow and survive. Sediment can also destroy aquatic habitats.
- Excess nutrients can cause algae blooms. When algae die, they sink to the bottom and decompose in a process that removes oxygen from the water. Fish and other aquatic organisms can't exist in water with low dissolved oxygen levels.
- Bacteria and other pathogens can wash into fishing, boating, and swimming areas creating health hazards, that make closures of our recreational waters necessary.
- Debris—plastic bags, six-pack rings, bottles, and cigarette butts—washed into water bodies can choke, suffocate, or disable aquatic life.
- Household hazardous wastes like insecticides, pesticides, paint, solvents, used motor oil, and other auto fluids can poison aquatic life. Land animals and people can become sick or die from eating diseased fish and shellfish or ingesting polluted water.
- Polluted stormwater often affects drinking water sources. This in turn can affect human health and increase drinking water treatment costs.



Did You Know?

Cooking oil from frying your turkey or cooking other meats and foods can be recycled. This year the city will hold two recycling events!

Recycle it for FREE!
November 30 & December 1 and
December 28 & 29
8 a.m. - 6 p.m.; Daily
Central Service Center, 2711 Nimitz Lane

WASHING CITY VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT

Did you know that the city has a standard operating procedure for washing city vehicles and equipment? This SOP ensures that all city equipment and vehicles are washed in an appropriate location designed and maintained to prevent pollution of surface waters. Wash water from equipment and vehicles can contain a variety of contaminants which can harm aquatic life and the quality of our surface waters. Some of the contaminants include detergents, grease, oils, and heavy metals.

City vehicles and equipment may be washed using one of the following:

- Clean all parts and equipment indoors using the appropriate parts washer
- Vehicles and large equipment may be washed at any of the city car washes or wash bays that are under cover and equipped with a grit trap.
- City vehicles may also be washed at the commercial carwash where the city has a price agreement.
- City vehicles or equipment may not be washed outside where the wash water will flow to the street, or storm drain, except under unusual circumstances with supervisor approval and only if the following procedures are followed:
 1. Place a berm around the vehicle to be washed and use a wet/dry vacuum to capture all the wash water.
 2. Captured wash water may be discharged to the sanitary sewer at one of the city wash bays

When using a city carwash or wash bay:

- Make sure the vehicle or equipment is inside the wash bay.
- All wash water should be contained in the carwash/wash bay.
- Notify your supervisor if wash water is flowing out of the carwash or wash bay.



DUMPSTERS AT CITY FACILITIES

An easy way to help the city reduce pollution is by looking at the dumpster at your facility and ensuring it meets the following:

- Dumpster lids (both top and side) are required to be closed when not in use.
- The dumpster must be water tight. This includes having a drain plug in the small round hole at the bottom. The drain plug keeps liquid from the trash and rainwater contaminated with trash contained in the dumpster, thus preventing it from entering the storm drain system.
- The dumpster should not have any holes in the bottom or have any liquid leaking out of it.
- All trash should be placed in the dumpster and not on the ground around it! The ground around the dumpsters should be cleaned regularly.

