

## Never Put Anything Into A Storm Drain!

### THE ISSUES

Contrary to popular belief, water that flows into our storm drains is not piped to a water treatment facility and cleaned before it is returned to our streams and rivers. In coastal South Carolina, storm drains direct water into stormwater ponds, which then connect to streams and rivers, or the drains dump water directly into receiving water bodies. These are the same water bodies that are the source of our drinking water. If there are contaminants in the water that enters storm drains, then they too will be washed into local waterways.

Take note of curbs and gutters near your home or business. If they are present, they likely lead to a storm drain nearby. They will transport anything that is washed or dumped into them from nearby properties, such as your yard or the street, into a nearby waterway.

### WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Wash your car over your lawn or a gravel area, rather than in the driveway or street. Water from car washing carries many pollutants such as oils and heavy metals. Rather than allowing this polluted water to run down curbs and into a storm drain, if you wash it in your yard, the soil and gravel act as filters and remove

Allowing water from your home car wash to flow directly into a storm drain threatens the health of nearby waterways. This practice should be avoided.



some of these pollutants, keeping them out of our streams and rivers. An even better alternative is to wash your car at a carwash. The drains at carwashes collect the water, clean it, and then

recycle it for reuse within the carwash. The high pressure hoses also use less water than your home water hose, so carwashes save water, and prevent car-based contaminants from entering local water bodies. If you must wash your car at home, in addition to washing it over grass or gravel, remember to use biodegradable, phosphate-free, and environmentally friendly cleaning products. Empty remaining water from a bucket into a toilet or sink rather than dumping it outside. Also, don't use a water hose to wash contaminants such as oil spills or antifreeze off your driveway. Use kitty litter or other absorbent material to soak up chemicals, sweep up the mixture, bag it and throw it away. Sweep up other debris, such as leaves or pine needles, with a broom rather than using a water hose.

Keep litter (paper, plastic, etc) and yard debris (leaves, grass) clear from storm drains. Litter is easily carried into storm drains and waterways by wind and rain. Be sure that items are secured before placing them outside for curb-side trash and recycling pick up, and that household items are properly stored in closed sheds or garages. Never dump anything directly into a storm drain! Take chemicals (motor oil, household pesticides, etc) to appropriate disposal facilities at your local landfill, and pour common, non-toxic household cleaners such as detergents down a sink drain that is connected to a sewer or septic system rather than outside.



We've all seen trash and debris in rivers and along our beaches. We often assume that it comes from careless boaters or beach goers. In fact, most of this litter is washed off of the land and transported by storm drains, gutters, and into streams and eventually to the ocean. And this is just the litter you can see! Think of the other contaminants that make their way into storm drains that aren't visible to the eye! The best way to keep this pollution out of our waters is to keep it out of our storm drains!