State Water Resources Control Board

www.swrcb.ca.gov

Office of Legislative and Public Affairs

Legislative Information:	(916) 341-5251	Water Quality Information:	(916) 341-5455
Public Affairs Information:	(916) 341-5254	Water Rights Information:	(916) 341-5300

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Storm Water Pollution and the Solutions

State Water Resources Control Board
CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

The State Water Resources Control Board and the nine regional water quality control boards work together to protect California's water resources.

You are the solution

A sewer system and a storm drain system are not the same.

These two systems are different. The water that goes down a sink or toilet flows to a wastewater treatment plant where it is treated and filtered. Water that flows down driveways and streets into a gutter goes into a storm drain that flows directly to a lake, river or the ocean. This water may pick up pollutants along the way and is not treated.

There are many pollutants that enter storm drains.

Some common contaminants include: motor oil, pesticides, brake dust, pet waste, paint and household chemicals. Rain takes oil and grit left by cars; sprinklers wash pesticides, fertilizers and weed killers from our gardens and lawns; detergents, oils and grease from washing the car all make runoff dirty.

The effects of pollutants on our water can be harmful.

This polluted runoff can have harmful effects on drinking water supplies, recreational use and wildlife. Beaches, lakes and creeks have been closed because of contaminated storm water. It is important to keep runoff clean.

There are ways to prevent storm water pollution.

- Don't dump waste in storm drains.
- Inspect and maintain your car regularly to prevent oil and antifreeze leaks.
- Take motor oil, antifreeze and other fluids to a recycling station.
- Use kitty litter to clean up leaks and spills.Never hose spills in the gutter. Sweep driveways clean.
- Reduce your driving! Try car pooling, riding your bike and public transportation.
- Dispose of household chemicals properly.
- Avoid buying oil-based paint.
- Take unused oil-based paint, paint thinner, varnishes and solvents to a recycling center.
- Wash water-based paint brushes in the sink.
- Buy household and garden products that are environmentally safe. Try to buy only the amount you need.
- Apply all household and garden products sparingly and follow instructions. Do not apply lawn or garden products when rain is forecast.
- Take unused pesticides, fertilizers, weed killers and paints to a recycling station.
- Shovel up pet waste and throw away in the garbage or flush down the toilet.

The federal *Clean Water Act* requires operators of various industrial facilities, construction sites and urban areas to control the amount of pollutants entering their storm drain systems.

The state board through general storm water permits regulates industrial facilities and construction sites. Cities and Counties are regulated through Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permits issued by the regional boards.

For more information contact your local Regional Water Quality Control Board and speak with a staff member or see our Web site.

www.swrcb.ca.gov/stormwtr/index.html

Storm Water General Inquiries Line and e-mail address:
(916) 341-5536
e-mail: stormwater@swrcb.ca.gov

You are the solution

Urban runoff flows into storm drains located in the streets. In most cases, it goes directly to our creeks, lakes and rivers.