

Simple Steps At Home

Your yard care routine can be stormwater friendly just by following a few simple tips below to help reduce stormwater pollution!

No Dumping Into Stormdrains

Everything that enters a stormdrain goes directly to local waters- without treatment!

- Don't dump, wash, or rake anything directly into a stormdrain or into the path of stormdrain.
- Keep all lawn chemicals and yard debris out of stormdrains. Even grass clippings and excess leaves don't belong in our streams and rivers.



Fertilize Sparklingly

Unfortunately, lawn care chemicals often wind up washing right into local waters.

- Go natural -and you may not need any fertilizer at all! Mow high and leave grass clippings on the lawn. It helps improve the lawn's health and quality, and you're less likely to need fertilizer.
- If you must fertilize, September is the best month. And be sure to use slow-release fertilizer.
- If you want to fertilize more than once, wait until after the spring green-up. A good rule of thumb: wait until you've mowed the lawn three times.
- Avoid using fertilizers or pesticides near wellheads or within 75 feet of waterways.
- Check the weather forecast before applications, and don't apply fertilizers or pesticides when there is rain predicted.
- Avoid using combination fertilizer/pesticide products. Hand pick weeds when possible, and if you must treat weeds or insects with pesticides, spot treat them rather than dousing the entire lawn.



Sweep Spills Back Onto The Lawn

Anything that's lying on pavement is more easily washed by stormwater down storm drains.

- If any chemicals or yard debris get on the sidewalk or driveway, sweep them back onto the lawn to prevent it from washing into storm drains.
- Don't hose the driveway or the sidewalk to get it clean.



Recycle Rainwater

The water that runs off roofs and other hard surfaces often flows directly to the nearest storm drain. Instead, consider one of the following methods to keep stormwater on your property and out of storm drains!



- [Get A Rain Barrel](#) They are installed under a roof downspout or sometimes connected directly to the downspout. The water that's captured can be used for irrigation.
- If the runoff from your roof flows directly onto pavement, consider using downspout extenders to direct the water to a landscaped area instead.
- You may want to consider building a [Rain Garden](#) to collect and treat runoff.
- If you're thinking of re-paving your driveway, consider an alternative: a wide range of porous materials have become available that allow water to pass through their surface (in the case of porous asphalt or concrete) or through void spaces (in the case of concrete or grid pavers). Many times, these porous materials are the same price or cheaper than installing conventional asphalt or concrete.

How Healthy Is Your Septic System?

Improperly maintained septic systems are a top contaminant of water resources in the City of Auburn.

How Does My Septic System Affect Water Quality?

If your home is not on a municipal sewer, when you flush your toilet or pour something down the drain, it goes to a septic system. Eventually, that wastewater exits the septic tank and enters a drainfield, where it passes into the soil. The soil acts as a biological filter and continues the treatment process that began in the tank. The soil is able to remove harmful organisms, organic matter and some nutrients.

However, if your septic tank is not regularly inspected and pumped, it will begin to accumulate solids and overflow, clogging the drainfield. Not only can this cause your system to fail, but it also can spread disease and contaminate ground and surface waters.

Everyday Actions

Having regular maintenance inspections and pump-outs of your septic system will keep it working efficiently and can prevent costly repairs. However, there are also daily precautions that you can take to help your septic system function properly.



Think before you flush. Aside from wastewater, toilet paper is the only other thing that should be flushed. Using the toilet to dispose of items such as sanitary products, paper towels, disposable diapers, cigarette butts, and even tissues will harm your septic tank and cause you to need pump-outs more often.



Don't put food down your sink. Septic systems are not intended to dispose of food waste, coffee grounds, grease, or fat, and, in fact, they will harm the septic tank. Try using a compost pile for non-meat food waste; it will help you avoid paying for unnecessary septic system repairs!



Don't use a kitchen garbage disposal. Having a garbage disposal doesn't make food waste, grease, or fat any easier for your system to handle. If you do use a garbage disposal, it's especially important that you have a larger than normal tank, that it has an effluent screen, and that you pump out more frequently.



Don't rinse toxic materials down your sink or toilet. Pouring disinfectants, large amounts of bleach, drain clearing products, oils, and other chemicals down your sink, bathtub, or toilet will damage your septic system. Even rinsing paintbrushes in the sink or toilet allows enough paint to travel to your tank that the tank's function can be impaired.



Reduce your water usage. Water conservation protects your septic system because it reduces the load of wastewater your system has to handle. It also will save you money on water bills, and with a little practice, it's easy to do:

For more information go to www.cleanwatercampaign.com/Stormwater/stowmwater-resources.

