

Only Rain Down the Drain

Storm drains are designed to carry only rainwater. They flow directly to creeks and rivers and into Monterey Bay without any type of treatment. When painting materials, paving and construction materials, and household wastes enter storm drains, they pollute waterways and are toxic to aquatic life. These tips will help you reduce pollution from your home activities and protect our environment.

Pollution Prevention Tips

Small changes can make a

BIG
difference.



Pollution Prevention Tips

Taking Care of Your Home and the Environment

**Painting,
General Home
Maintenance,
and Construction**



Taking Care of Your Home and the Environment

Painting

- Oil-based paints, paint thinners, and cleaning solvents must be disposed of as hazardous wastes. These wastes are accepted free of charge by your Household Hazardous Waste Facility (see below). Consider using latex or water-based paints as an easier alternative.
- If using latex paints, the brush or roller may be rinsed in the sink.
- If using oil-based paints, the brush or roller must be cleaned in a bucket. All cleaning fluids and rinses, such as paint thinner or water, must be collected in the bucket and disposed of as a hazardous waste.
- Never rinse paint brushes or paint containers in the street or storm drain.

General Home Maintenance

Some common household wastes, such as motor oil, antifreeze, oil-based paints, pesticides, and herbicides are hazardous wastes! They must be disposed of properly—they cannot be poured down the sink, toilet, on the ground, or into the storm drain.

- Do not plumb the drain from your dishwasher or washing machine to outside areas because soaps and detergents are pollutants.
- Dispose of soapy water, such as water from window or carpet cleaning, into the sink or toilet. If you hire a cleaning service, ask where they discharge the wastewater. Be sure that they do not discharge it into a storm drain.

Concrete, Masonry and Asphalt

- Paving and construction materials, if allowed to reach the street via wind or rain, clog gutters, storm drains, and creeks.
- Use a tarp under mixers or on areas used for mixing.
- Be sure to cover and store open cement and plaster bags, loose materials, and debris so that wind or rain will not carry them into the street or storm drain.
- Sweep, instead of hosing down, when cleaning up.

- Dispose of small amounts of excess dry concrete, grout, and mortar in the trash.
- Collect and reuse excess gravel and sand, or give them away to a neighbor.
- Rinse off mixers, tools, and other equipment in a dirt area where the water can soak into the ground and won't go into the street or storm drain.
- Be sure that any contractors you hire abide by municipal codes and these pollution prevention tips.

Pollution prevention

can be easy. Small

changes in the way you

do things around the

house and in your yard

make a big difference.

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County of Santa Cruz

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