

FAQs – Storm Drainage

Q: *Is there a difference between the storm drain and sewer system?*

A: Yes, an important difference. Stormwater and all the pollutants that flow from our homes, parking lots and streets to the gutter into the storm drains discharge into our creeks and other water bodies without treatment. Water and pollutants that flow into the sanitary sewer, such as water from our bathtubs and toilet, are sent to wastewater treatment facilities before being discharged into local creeks and rivers. This is why it is critically important not to dispose of oil and other pollutants into the storm drain system.

Q: *Leaves and yard clipping are organic. Why can't I put them down the storm drain?*

A: Leaves and yard clipping can clog the storm drain system and cause backups. Also, when organic and/or yard waste decays in water, the "breakdown" process removes oxygen from the water that is necessary for the health of all aquatic species from microorganisms to fish.

Q: *What is a watershed and how do I affect it?*

A: A watershed is an area of land that catches and drains water into a creek, stream or river via direct runoff. As stormwater flows over land and into the storm drain or across the watershed and into the creek, it can carry polluted urban runoff such as used motor oil and grease, pesticides, trash and other harmful debris. It is important for the health of our waterways to prevent these items from running into the storm drain system to the extent possible.