

A Contractor's Guide to

STORM WATER POLLUTION PREVENTION



Our Watershed, Our Responsibility

- A watershed is an area of land that catches rain and snow melt and drains into a river, lake, stream, or wetland. There are several major watersheds in Allegan County including the Kalamazoo River Watershed and the Macatawa Watershed.
- As citizens and contractors living and working in Allegan County, it is your duty to ensure that the surface waters of the community are kept clean and healthy.

Where Do Storm Drains Go?

- Storm drains, catch basins, and ditches are directly connected to local waterways.
- This direct connection means that whatever enters the storm drain eventually enters a river, lake, stream or wetland.
- When fertilizer, yard waste, sediment, or other contaminants enter a storm drain, it has adverse effects on local waterways.



Eliminating Illicit Discharges

- An illicit discharge is the discharge of pollutants to storm sewer systems via overland flow or direct dumping into catch basins.
- Illicit discharges are illegal! Reporting them can help eliminate the problem and keep our rivers and streams clean.

Report an illicit discharge to the Pollution Emergency Alerting System (PEAS) at (800) 292-5706 or to the Allegan County Road Commission at (269) 673-2184.

Practicing Healthy Land Care

- Use a fertilizer that is organic slow-release with low or no phosphorus. Phosphorus is the main cause of algae growth in streams, which depletes the oxygen aquatic organisms need to survive.
- Get your soil tested through your county Michigan State University Extension office. This will tell you what fertilizer you should use, if any.
- Don't dump leaves or grass clippings down the drain or blow them into the street! Decaying leaves also deplete the oxygen in streams. They can be used as mulch, or they can be disposed of by curbside pick-up.

Maintaining Your Fleet

- Leaky vehicles and construction machinery can easily cause stream contamination by tracking fluids and other pollutants off site, eventually draining into a catch basin
- You can prevent vehicle fluids from entering local bodies of water by ensuring that your vehicles and equipment are properly maintained and in good working condition.
- Proper disposal of chemicals and other waste is critical to the health of streams and rivers. Solid and liquid waste materials are not meant to be dumped in catch basins. Remember that catch basins are made for storm water only!



- Manage riparian land wisely! Leaving a buffer zone of 20 feet between lawns and streams prevents stream bank erosion, stops pollutants from reaching the stream, and creates a habitat for local wildlife.

Managing Streets and Parking Lots

- Storm water runoff from streets and parking lots is a main cause of pollution because the storm water takes sediment and other solids with it into catch basins.
- The runoff from these impervious surfaces entering streams contains total suspended solids (TSS).
- Suspended solids make water in streams cloudy, which inhibits aquatic plant growth. This in turn affects the health of aquatic organisms that require oxygen from the aquatic plants.
- You can prevent this by keeping roads clean near the construction site and have a designated disposal area for cigarette butts and other small debris that can make its way into a catch basin.



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