



# Household Habits for Clean Water

By practicing healthy household habits, homeowners can keep common pollutants like pesticides, pet waste, grass clippings, and automotive fluids off the ground and out of stormwater. Adopt these healthy household habits and help protect lakes, streams, rivers and wetlands.

Remember to share the enclosed habits with your neighbors to prevent stormwater pollution, because we are all downstream!

YOU are the key to reducing pollution that flows into our waterways! Your actions have an impact on the water cycle. Here is a list of things you can do to help reduce water pollution.

## Lawn and Garden

- Use pesticides and fertilizers, which include phosphorous, sparingly. When use is necessary, use these chemicals in the recommended amounts.
- Select native plants and grasses that are drought and pest resistant. Native plants require less water, fertilizer and fewer pesticides.
- Sweep up yard debris, rather than hosing down areas. Compost or recycle yard waste when possible.
- Don't over water your lawn. Over watering will cause water to run off into the storm drain. On average, established grass in Parker only needs 1.5 inches of irrigation water per week during the summer months.
- Cover piles of dirt and mulch being used in landscaping projects to prevent these pol-

lutants from blowing or washing off your yard and into local waterbodies. Vegetate bare spots in your yard to prevent soil erosion.

## Pet Care

- When walking your pet, remember to pick up the waste and dispose of it properly. Leaving pet waste on the ground increases public health risks by allowing harmful bacteria and nutrients to wash into the storm drain and eventually into local waterbodies.

## Vehicle and Garage

- Use a commercial car wash or wash your car on a lawn or other unpaved surface to minimize the amount of dirty, soapy water flowing into the storm drain and eventually into your local waterbody.
- Check your car, boat, motorcycle and other machinery and equipment for leaks and spills. Make repairs as soon as possible. Clean up spilled fluids with an absorbent material, like kitty litter or sand and don't rinse the spills into a nearby storm drain. Remember to properly dispose of the absorbent material.
- Recycle used oil and other automotive fluids at participating service stations. Don't dump these chemicals down the storm drain or dispose of them in your trash.

## Home Repair and Improvement

- Before beginning an outdoor project, locate the nearest storm drains and protect them from debris and other materials.

- Sweep up and properly dispose of construction debris, such as concrete and mortar.
- Use hazardous substances like paints, solvents and cleaners in the smallest amounts possible, and follow the directions on the label. Clean up spills immediately, and dispose of the waste safely. Store substances properly to avoid leaks and spills.
- Purchase and use nontoxic, biodegradable, recycled and recyclable products whenever possible.
- Clean paint brushes in a sink, not outdoors. Filter and reuse paint thinner when using oil-based paints.
- Properly dispose of excess paints through a household hazardous waste collection program, or donate unused paint to local organizations.
- Reduce the amount of paved area and increase the amount of vegetated area in your yard. Use native plants in your landscaping to reduce the need for watering during dry periods. Consider directing downspouts away from paved surfaces onto lawns and other measures to increase infiltration and reduce polluted runoff.

The Town of Parker sponsors an annual household hazardous waste roundup in April. Call the Tri-County Health Department at 303.220.9200 or visit [www.tchd.org](http://www.tchd.org) for information on where to take household hazardous waste.

For more information about pollutants in stormwater runoff, please call the Town of Parker Public Works Department at 303.841.0353 or go to [www.parkeronline.org](http://www.parkeronline.org).

### What is Stormwater Runoff?

Stormwater runoff occurs when precipitation from rain or snowmelt flows over the ground. Impervious surfaces like roofs, driveways, sidewalks and streets prevent stormwater from naturally soaking into the ground.

### The Cherry Creek Basin

Did you know that if you live in the Town of Parker, your stormwater runoff ends up in the Cherry Creek Reservoir? The Cherry Creek Basin Water Quality Authority protects water quality in the Cherry Creek Reservoir Basin by regulating the amount of phosphorous released into area waterways. Phosphorous promotes algae growth which affects our recreational, fishery, and drinking water resources.

### Why is Stormwater Runoff a Problem?

Stormwater flows over roofs, driveways, lawns, and sidewalks, picking up debris, chemicals, dirt, and other pollutants. Stormwater can flow into a storm sewer system or directly to a lake, stream, river, or wetland. Anything that enters a storm sewer system is discharged untreated into the waterbodies we use for swimming, fishing, and providing drinking water. Polluted runoff is the nation's greatest threat to clean water.

Be aware that your actions have an impact! During storm events, the large areas of impervious surfaces (rooftops, driveways, sidewalks) in developed areas cause less water to soak into the ground and an increase in stormwater runoff to drainage ditches, streams, lakes and detention ponds. The remnants of our daily activities are carried by runoff directly to streams or lakes — like the Cherry Creek Reservoir.



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