

Everyone can contribute to stormwater pollution prevention

Story at a Glance

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- The rain washes pollution from streets, parking lots, and lawns into storm drains. From there the water travels directly to drinking-water supplies. It also enters the ocean and lakes that children play in. Fertilizer, oil, pesticides, detergents, pet waste, grass clippings ... you name it and it ends up in our water.

by Matthew Ewald

Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst Environmental Office

JOINT BASE MCGUIRE-DIX-LAKEHURST, N.J. -- Stormwater pollution is one of New Jersey's greatest threats to clean and plentiful water and that's why Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst residents are doing something about it.

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Community members can keep common pollutants out of stormwater by sharing the responsibility and making small, easy changes in their daily lives. Every step adds up to cleaner water and lowers the cost of cleaning up once it's dirty.

New Jersey adopted an initiative to keep its water clean and plentiful and to meet federal requirements. Many municipalities and other public agencies, including colleges and military installations, must adopt ordinances or other rules prohibiting various activities that contribute to stormwater pollution. Breaking these rules can result in fines or other penalties.

As a resident, business owner or other member of the New Jersey community, it is important to practice the following steps every day in order to protect the water:

Limit the use of fertilizers and pesticides:

- Conduct a soil test to see if you need a fertilizer.
- Look into alternatives for pesticides.
- Maintain a small lawn and keep the rest of your property or yard in a natural state with trees and other native vegetation that requires little or no fertilizer.
- If you use fertilizers and pesticides, follow the instructions on the label on how to correctly apply it.
- Make sure you properly store or discard any unused portions.

Properly use and dispose of hazardous products:

- Hazardous products include some household or commercial cleaning products, lawn and garden care products, motor oil, antifreeze and paints.
- Do not pour any hazardous products down a storm drain because storm drains are usually connected to local water bodies and the water is not treated.
- If you have hazardous products in your home or workplace, make sure you store or dispose of them according to respective labels.
- Use natural or less-toxic alternatives when possible.
- Recycle used motor oil.
- Contact your municipality, county or facility management office for the locations of hazardous-waste disposal facilities.

Keep pollution out of storm drains:

- Municipalities and many other public agencies are required to mark certain storm drain inlets with messages reminding people that storm drains are connected to local water bodies.
- Do not let sewage or other wastes flow into stormwater systems.

Clean up after your pet:

- Many municipalities and public agencies must enact and enforce local pet-waste rules.
- An example is requiring pet owners or their keepers to pick up and properly dispose of pet waste dropped on public or other people's property.
- Make sure you know your town's or agency's requirements and comply with them. They are the law.
- Use newspaper, bags or pooper-scoopers to pick up waste.
- Dispose of the wrapped pet waste in the trash or unwrapped in a toilet.
- Never discard pet waste in a storm drain.

Don't feed wildlife:

- Do not feed wildlife, such as ducks and geese, in public areas.
- Many municipalities and other public agencies must enact and enforce a rule that prohibits people from feeding wildlife in these areas.

Don't litter:

- Place litter in trash receptacles.
- Recycle. Recycle. Recycle.
- Participate in community cleanups.

Dispose of yard waste properly:

- Keep leaves and grass out of storm drains.
- If your municipality or agency has yard waste collection rules, follow them.
- Use leaves and grass clippings as a resource for compost.
- Use a mulching mower that recycles grass clippings into the lawn.

For more information on stormwater pollution prevention on Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, contact Matthew Ewald JB MDL at 609-754-1773