



YARD CARE

People caring for their homes can unknowingly impact local waterways through improper handling and disposal of landscape and yard materials, stockpiles, debris, chemicals, fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides. Materials swept, raked, or spilled on the ground or pavement can be carried by rain, residential water, or wind into our local creeks and can be harmful to water quality and creek habitats.

Products labeled “nontoxic” and “biodegradable” can still harm wildlife if they enter the storm drain system. These products are prohibited discharges to the storm drain system.

HOW ARE THE STORM DRAIN AND SANITARY SEWER SYSTEMS DIFFERENT?

The storm drain system transports rainwater to local creeks, rivers, and the ocean. This system was created to prevent flooding within communities and homes.

All water and materials that enter the storm drain system are untreated.

The sanitary sewer is a plumbed system that transports used water from buildings to a wastewater collection and treatment facility, where the water and sewage is treated.

If you see an outdoor drain and are unsure of its use, assume it is a storm drain and do not discharge wash water to it.

Clean creeks are important. They provide vital fish habitat, recreation, and add to the beauty of our city.

GARDENING TIPS

- Check the weather; avoid application of fertilizer, pesticides, and loose materials if rain or high wind is forecasted.
- Sweep or rake up grass clippings, leaves and yard waste, and place in yard waste bin.
- Never blow, sweep, or dump grass clippings, leaves, branches, sticks, or other yard waste onto creek banks or into the creek.
- Keep as much of your yard landscaped as possible. Landscaping absorbs more rainwater than unplanted soils and cleans the water it absorbs.
- Avoid using plastic; it does not allow water to percolate into the ground and it can become a trash problem.
- Our Water, Our World helps residents manage their home and garden pests in a way that helps protect our creeks. For more information, refer to: <https://ourwaterourworld.org/>

FERTILIZERS, HERBICIDES AND, PESTICIDES

- Use natural non-toxic alternatives whenever possible. For more information, refer to the Our Water, Our World website.
- If you must use traditional products, spot apply only.
- Avoid application on hard surfaces, such as curbs and driveways.
- Stay away from creeks, ponds, and ditches as a rule. Spraying within 100 feet of these features requires a permit from the State.
- Must be disposed of as hazardous waste. Call your local County administered Household Hazardous Waste program or collection facility for more information and locations.

YARD WASTE AND LANDSCAPING MATERIALS

- Keep material and debris out of the gutter and catch basins.
- Protect bare soil.
- Disturb the least amount of soil and existing vegetation as possible to complete the work.
- Schedule landscape grading and excavation projects for dry weather.
- Cover stockpiles and store chemicals away from rain and runoff.

IRRIGATION

- Residential water should never be discharged to a street, gutter, or storm drain.
- Avoid overspray and over irrigation.
- Fix leaks.
- Use drip and bubbler irrigation.
- Use low flow sprinkler heads to minimize overspray, evaporation, and runoff.

COMPOST FOR CLEANER WATER

Composting yard waste is an environmentally sound way of reducing solid waste by recycling a useful resource. To prevent garden clippings and yard waste from flowing into the storm drain system, place materials in a yard waste container or create a compost pile in your yard.

MULCH FOR FERTILIZER AND WEED PREVENTION

- Use mulch or compost, rather than fertilizer, for healthier plants. Benefits include holding moisture longer, helping prevent weeds and saving money.
- Consider covering the area with a thick mulch, burlap, or landscape cloth, paper sheeting, or cardboard. These options suppress weeds without chemicals and allow rainwater to percolate into the ground.

EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE

- Clean up drips or small spills immediately.
- Separate hazardous wastes and use secondary containment for storage.

CLEAN UP

- Clean up spills right away.
- Use dry cleanup methods only (i.e. broom or vacuum).
- Sweep up loose materials and place them in the trash.
- Cover and protect unused, materials.
- Share leftover fertilizer and pesticides with a neighbor or dispose of unused products at the Household Toxics Facility. Call your local County administered Household Hazardous Waste program or collection facility for more information and locations.

Releasing pollutants into the storm drain system or a waterway is prohibited by local ordinance, state, and federal law.

For an emergency or a spill involving hazardous materials or hazardous waste call 911 or your local Fire Department.

For All Non-Emergency / Non-Hazardous Spills

- To report a Non-Hazardous spill, or for other useful phone numbers, see Spill Numbers informational reference sheet for your local agency contact information or visit: www.streetstocreeks.org/spill-numbers/

Note: When purchasing mulch at a local garden center or landscape supplier, limit use of bright bark mulch, which leaches toxins into the storm drain system, and keep it away from street gutters and yard drains.



HAVE QUESTIONS?

Use the QR code to find your local stormwater contact or visit: mcstoppp.org/illegal-discharge-contacts



www.mcstoppp.org

(415) 473-6528

mcstoppp@marincounty.org

www.StreetstoCreeks.org