



Why is Stormwater Runoff a Problem?

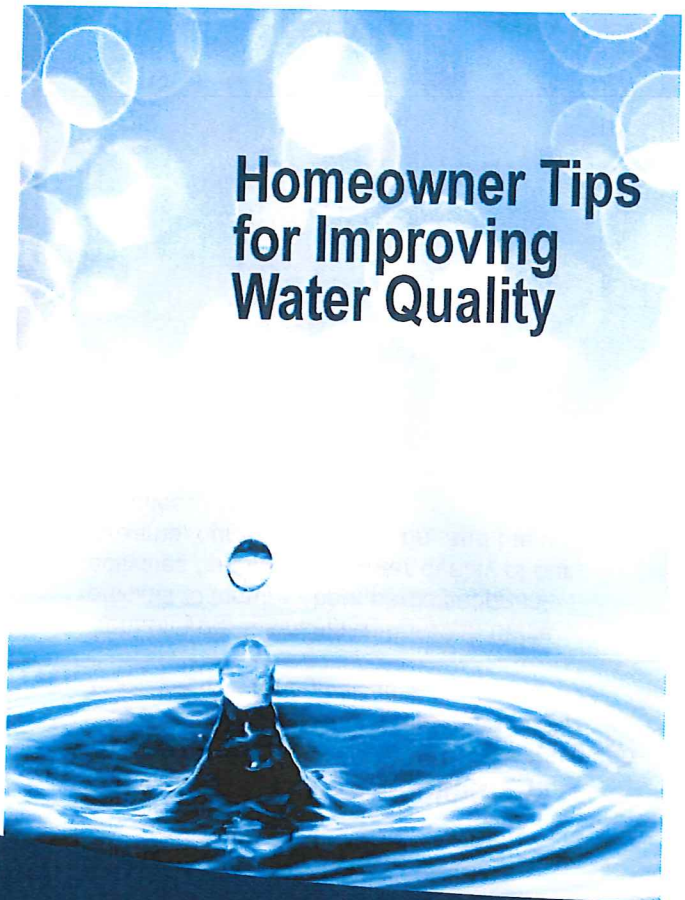
Stormwater can pick up debris, chemicals, dirt, and other pollutants and flow into a storm sewer system or directly to a lake, stream, river, wetland, or coastal water. Anything that enters a storm sewer system is discharged untreated into the waterbodies we use for swimming, fishing and providing drinking water.

Polluted stormwater runoff can have many adverse effects on plants, fish, animals and people such as:

- Sediment can cloud the water and make it difficult or impossible for aquatic plants to grow.
- Debris such as plastic bags, bottles, and cigarette butts washed into waterbodies can suffocate and disable aquatic life like ducks, fish, turtles, and birds.
- Household hazardous wastes like insecticides, pesticides, paint, solvents, used motor oil, and other auto fluids can poison aquatic life. Land animals and people can become sick from eating diseased fish and shellfish or ingesting polluted water.

What is Stormwater Runoff?

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



Homeowner Tips for Improving Water Quality

Stormwater Management for the Homeowner

Learn what you can do on your property and in your community to improve the health of your watershed.

Township of Cumru
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Lawn and Garden

Use pesticides and fertilizers sparingly. Avoid applications with heavy rain in the forecast and do not apply on frozen ground. Keep fertilizer off impervious surfaces like driveways and pavements. These chemicals can be washed into the storm water system or local streams. Use organic products.

Sweep up yard debris and compost it instead of hosing down dirty areas into the street and storm water drains. Utilize the Spring Township facilities for yard debris composting.

Do not blow grass clippings into the street which can block storm water drains. Let lawn clippings lay to fertilize the lawn or compost.

Maintain a buffer strip of unmowed natural vegetation bordering waterways to trap excess nutrients and sediment entering into those water bodies.

Install a rain barrel at the bottom of your gutter downspout to collect rainwater for watering your garden and plants.

Pet Care

Pick up your pet waste – leaving pet waste on the ground can pose a health risk from their bacteria which can come in direct contact with people or enter into the stormwater system and the local water supply.

Flush your pet waste down the toilet, so that it can be treated at the sewage treatment plant.

Vehicle Maintenance

Wash your vehicle on the lawn or unpaved surface; use low phosphate detergent; dump soapy water bucket down the toilet.

Check your vehicle for leaks and drips- these drips can be picked up in rain water and can enter stormwater drains and/or streams. Clean up any spilled fluids to avoid contamination of water.

Recycle used motor oil and other fluids at a participating service station. NEVER pour these fluids down the toilet, into stormdrains, on the ground, or into streams.

Home Improvement

Sweep up debris before it enters storm drains or waterbodies; prevent obstruction of storm drains and water contamination.

Use paints and solvents sparingly; clean up spills; recycle leftover materials. Purchase non-toxic and biodegradable products. Check the County of Berks at www.co.berks.pa.us/swa for recycling events for household products.

Plant trees and increase vegetated yard area to increase rain water infiltration into the ground for recharge.

Get Involved in Your Community

Organize a clean up – litter and other trash can clog up stormwater drains and can pollute stormwater entering streams.

Contact your township or borough office officials to inquire about participation in activities that improve water quality of our streams, our water recreation, and the water supplies.

