

Help protect our new drainage systems and local waterways



The things you do around your home or business – fertilizing your lawn, blowing lawn clippings into the street, or dumping grease into the kitchen sink – can be detrimental to the city’s sewer and drainage systems and eventually harm nearby streams, rivers, Biloxi Back Bay and the Mississippi Sound.

Consider these sources of pollution: Nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus from fertilizers; uncontrolled stormwater runoff containing sediments from construction sites; pesticides from agricultural lands; animal wastes; failing septic systems; and household chemicals released directly into the environment.

It’s called non-point source pollution, as opposed to specific points, such as discharge pipes of factories and wastewater treatment plants, which are governed by state and federal regulations.

In short, it’s the responsibility of residents and business owners to minimize and prevent non-point source pollution. Individually, these pollutants may not be a major concern, but collectively they can cause widespread water quality problems. Unthinking actions can close beaches, kill wildlife, poison drinking water resources, and contaminate fish and shellfish.

Please follow these best practices.

- Use a commercial car wash or wash your car on a lawn or other unpaved surface to minimize dirty, soapy water flowing into the storm drain.
- Check your car, boat, motorcycle and other equipment for leaks and spills. Make repairs as soon as possible. Clean up spilled fluids with an absorbent material such as kitty litter or sand; do not rinse spills into a nearby storm drain. Properly dispose of the absorbent material at a hazardous waste disposal site.
- Recycle used oil and other automotive fluids at participating service stations or a hazardous waste disposal site; don’t dump these chemicals into the storm drain or the trash.

Vehicle & Garage



Lawn & Garden

- Use pesticides and fertilizers sparingly. Use these chemicals in the recommended amounts. Avoid application if heavy rain is forecast; otherwise, chemicals will be washed into local streams.
- Sweep up yard debris, rather than hosing down areas or blowing debris into the street where it will compromise storm drains. Compost or recycle yard waste when possible. Do not dispose of it in the storm drain or local waterways. During the decay process, these organic materials consume oxygen in the water, leaving fish, shellfish and plants without oxygen.
- Don’t over water your lawn. Water during cool times of the day; don’t let water runoff into storm drain. Select native plants and grasses that are drought- and pest-resistant. Native plants require less water, fertilizer and pesticides.
- Cover piles of dirt and mulch being used in landscaping projects to prevent pollutants from blowing or washing off your yard and into drainage ways. Vegetate bare spots in your yard to prevent soil erosion.



Household Hazardous Waste

- Before beginning an outdoor project, locate the nearest storm drains and protect them from debris and other materials.
- Do not “wash out” concrete and mortar into storm drains or ditches.
- Use hazardous substances such as paints, solvents and cleaners in the smallest amounts possible; follow directions on the label. Properly store substances to avoid leaks and spills, clean up spills immediately, and properly dispose of the waste. Dispose of household chemicals at a household hazardous waste disposal site.
- Use nontoxic, biodegradable, recycled and recyclable products when possible.
- Properly dispose of excess paint through a household hazardous waste collection program; do not pour paint into the storm drain or sink.
- Reduce the amount of paved areas and increase the amount of vegetated area in your yard. Consider directing downspouts away from paved surfaces onto lawns and other measures to decrease infiltration and reduce runoff.
- Never pour fats, oils and grease down the sink or garbage disposal. After they have cooled, pour them into a container, such as an empty glass jar or coffee can. Once the container is full, secure the lid and place in the trash. Before washing dishes containing oil or grease, scrape and dry wipe with paper towels and dispose of materials in the trash.

Harrison County operates a free hazardous waste site the second Saturday of every month, from 8 a.m. until noon at 10076 Lorraine Road. The site accepts latex or oil-based paint; used cooking or automobile oil; antifreeze; household, marine and car batteries; aerosol cans; flammable liquids (such as gasoline); freezers and refrigerators; fluorescent light bulbs; tires (up to 25 a household); and computers, cell phones, telephones, televisions. Do not bring items in containers larger than five gallons of herbicides, pesticides, asbestos, rubber cement, roofing material, explosives, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, construction debris, furniture, or waste from businesses. Questions? Kelly Griffin, 228-214-1405 or www.keepharrisoncountybeautiful.com

Pet Care

- When walking your pet, pick up pet waste and dispose of properly. Flushing pet waste is the best disposal method. Leaving pet waste on the ground increases public health risks; harmful bacteria and nutrients wash into ditches, storm drains and eventually into local water bodies.



Septic System Use & Maintenance

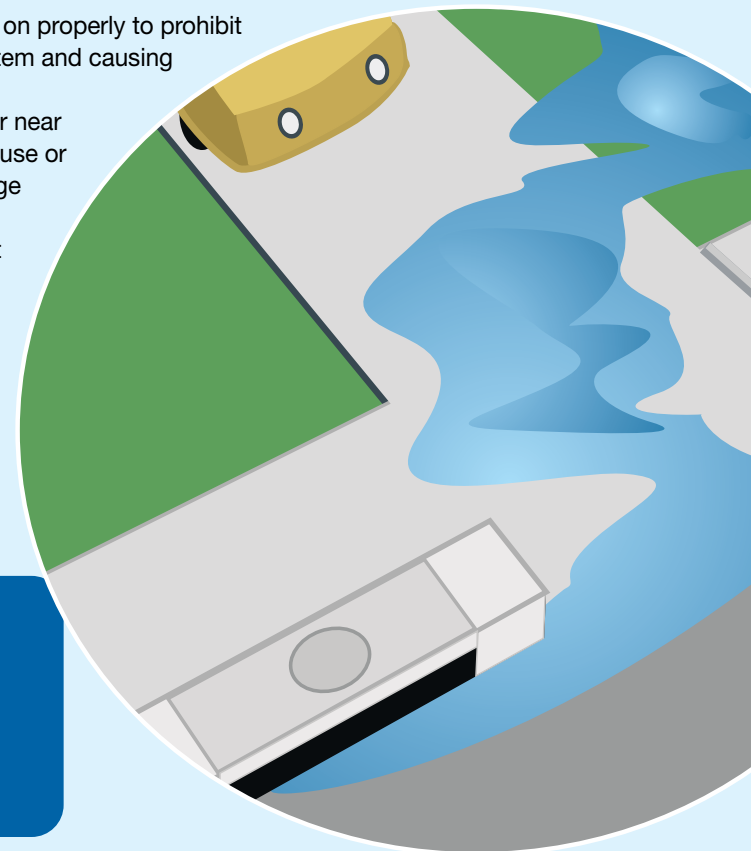


If you own a septic tank:

- Have a professional inspect your septic tank at least every three years and have the septic tank pumped as necessary (usually every three to five years).
- Care for the septic system drain field by not driving or parking vehicles on it. Plant only grass over and near the drain field to avoid damage by roots.
- Flush responsibly. Flushing household chemicals such as paint, pesticides, oil and antifreeze can destroy the biological treatment taking place in the system. Other items such as diapers, paper towels, and cat litter can clog the septic system and damage components.

If you’re connected to the city sanitary sewer system:

- Check your sewer “clean out” periodically to ensure the line is not clogged or that sewage is leaking out of the “clean out” into your lawn.
- Ensure that the sewer “clean out” cap is on properly to prohibit rain water from infiltrating the sewer system and causing overflows.
- Avoid planting trees and shrubs above or near the service lateral that runs from your house or building to the sewer main. Roots damage sewers.
- Flush responsibly. Wastewater treatment plants are not designed to remove pollutants from household chemicals such as paint, pesticides, oil and antifreeze. Never flush or pour down the sink any household chemicals or other items such as diapers, paper towels, and cat litter. They can clog the sewer system.



See a potential issue?

If you see a potential violation or issue, contact the Code Enforcement Division of the city’s Community Development Department at 228-435-0841 or email stormwater@biloxi.ms.us.