



REDUCING STORMWATER POLLUTION AT HOME

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Clean stormwater helps keep our creeks, rivers and lakes, beaches and oceans healthy. Keeping our stormwater clean also provides us with new opportunities for stormwater harvesting and reuse. This helps us to protect our precious water reserves.

Most stormwater pollution is caused by everyday activities, not by major spills or industrial accidents. We can all do something to prevent waste from our homes polluting the stormwater drain.

Does my home pollute Victoria's rivers and bays?

Stormwater from your home and garden drains to the nearest creek, river, lake or bay and is not treated to remove pollution before it reaches our waterways.

Pollution can include litter, dirt, grease and oil, paint, garden pesticides, detergents, pet droppings, grass clippings and many products found in and around our homes. This pollution can cause major environmental problems if it gets into the stormwater system.

The stormwater system is separate from the sewer, which carries waste from our laundry, kitchen, bathroom and toilet and sends it to a sewage treatment plant.

What damage does this pollution do?

Waste from our drains is a major source of pollution in Port Phillip Bay and a threat to inland rivers and lakes. What seems like a little bit of run-off from your house becomes a very serious problem when it is multiplied by every house in your city or town. Even 'natural' substances such as soil and animal droppings can be major hazards when they are highly concentrated in urban areas.

What can I do?

Fortunately, it's easy to keep our waterways clean.

In your street

- Bin all your litter. More than two billion pieces of litter are washed into Victorian

seas each year, especially cigarette butts and lolly wrappers. Don't leave rubbish next to a bin if it's already full – find another one.

- Make sure rubbish and recycling items are secured so they can't blow away.
- Keep bins securely closed to prevent dogs from raiding your waste.
- Pick up after your pets, in the park, on the street and at home. Use a scoop, shovel or plastic bag or put the droppings in your bin or garden/compost.

In your garden

- Sweep up grass clippings, fallen leaves and garden waste and compost them. Do not sweep them into the gutter where they can block drains, causing flooding and harming aquatic plants and animals.
- Use pesticides, herbicides and fertiliser wisely. Look for low-toxin alternatives and only use garden sprays on still days. Avoid using fertilisers on areas where they could wash off the garden or into a drain. Don't use them if rain is predicted over the following days.
- Landscape with care. Make sure soil and sand stockpiles do not cover street gutters. Protect stockpiles from wind and rain by storing under secured plastic sheeting or tarpaulins. Schedule grading and excavation projects during dry weather.

because this is our home





- Protect your soil. Use bunds or protective mesh to prevent soil or mulch from being washed or blown off the garden. Grass or replant areas of disturbed soil.

Home maintenance and renovation

- Return paint to the tin for reuse and clean brushes as follows:
 - ‘Paint’ the brush onto newspaper.
 - Rinse with a small amount of water (for water-based paints) or solvent (oil-based paints).
 - Let the water or solvent settle.
 - Water can be poured onto a garden bed. Solvent can be reused or sent to your council’s home chemical collection program.
 - The paint residue can go out with your rubbish.
- Clean with care. Put dirty water onto your lawn and garden or down the sink or toilet, not into a street gutter or drain.
- Keep pool and spa water out of stormwater drains. Plan your pool or use bunds to direct water away from the drain.
- Ask tradespeople to be stormwater safe. Tradespeople at your home might be causing pollution. Ask these people if their business uses measures to prevent pollution running into your gutters: builders, landscapers, gardeners, plumbers, painters, carpet steam/dry cleaners, mobile dog washers.
- DIY disposals - dispose of cement from mixers/barrows to your household waste. Don’t hose sand, gravel or cement down the drain or leave it uncovered where it could wash or blow away.

- Look for non-toxic alternatives for home products or use toxic materials sparingly. If you need to dispose of excess product, contact EcoRecycle Victoria (Free call 1800 353 233) or your local council for details of your household chemical collection.

Your car

- Wash your car on a grassed area (nature strip or lawn) or gravel to absorb the water (not in the street), or take it to a carwash that recycles water.
- Go easy on detergent and consider low-sodium, low-phosphate brands.
- Keep your car well maintained to reduce oil, fuel or radiator/brake fluid leaks.
- Take care with home repairs. If working on your car at home, use spill trays or absorbent materials (that you dispose of in the bin) to soak up any spills.
- Don’t pour leftover oil into the gutter - use your council’s household chemical collection service.

At work

- Be stormwater safe at work – particularly if your business uses chemicals or other products that could damage the environment if spilled down the drain.

Take action

- Clean up spills using dry absorbent materials (such as sand, sawdust or paper towel, as appropriate), which you dispose of in your bin. Never hose them down the drain – this also wastes precious water.
- Report stormwater pollution to EPA’s Pollution Watch line on 9695 2777 or 1800 444 004.



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