

Storm Water Pollution Prevention

You Can Make A Difference!

Virginia Highlands Community College
Storm Water Awareness Fact Sheet:
(MS4)

VHCC municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) is a part of a Storm Water Awareness Program that promotes the protection of our storm water ways which flow into the Upper Tennessee Water Shed.



What is Storm Water?

Storm water is a rain or snowmelt that falls on the roofs, lawns, or paved areas, like driveways and roads, and is pipes or culvert and ditches. As it flows over the land the land surface, storm water picks up or is contaminated by debris, chemicals, dirt and other pollutants.

Unlike wastewater, which is carried from our kitchen bathrooms, and house drains through the sanitary sewers to be treated at wastewater plants, storm water is untreated. It flows through storm water ways directly into creeks, lakes, and rivers which eventually discharge into our bays and oceans that we use for swimming, fishing and drinking water.

Why should I care?

Contaminated or polluted storm water can lead to a significant water quality problem.

- Sediment clouds the water making it difficult for aquatic plants to grow and destroying aquatic habitats.
- Excess nutrients cause algae blooms. Oxygen levels are depleted when the algae die and decompose. Fish and other aquatic organism can't live when oxygen levels decrease.
- Trash washed into the water can choke, suffocate, or disable aquatic life (ducks, fish, turtles, and birds).
- Household hazardous wastes (insecticides, paint, pesticides, and fluids for cars) can poison plant and aquatic life.
- Bacteria and other pathogens (commonly found in fecal waste) discharged in swimming areas create health hazards and cause beach closing.
- Polluted storm water often affects drinking water source – human health is at risk and water treatment cost rise.



Please Remember:

- What we do on the land affects the quality of the water we drink and use in so many ways.
 - Many small sources of pollution add up to cause big water quality problems.
- Natural things such as soil, leaves, grass clippings, and pet waste can cause water pollution.
- Waste dumped into storm sewers goes into lakes, streams, and coastal waters without treatment.
 - Automobiles and other vehicles cause water pollution as well as air pollution.
 - Everyone can make a difference!

Additional Information:

Websites –

- <http://www.dcr.virginia.gov>
- <http://www.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater>