



# Solutions to Stormwater Pollution

*Easy Things You Can Do Every Day To Protect Our Water*



The water that flows over our streets, lawns, driveways, and parking lots after a rain picks up harmful substances like chemicals, dirt and other pollutants. When it rains, stormwater flows into a storm sewer system or directly to a creek, lake, stream, river or other body of water. Anything that enters a storm sewer is discharged, untreated, into the waterbodies we use for swimming, fishing and providing drinking water. Polluted runoff is the nation's greatest threat to clean water.



By practicing healthy household habits, homeowners can keep common pollutants like pesticides, automotive fluids, grass clippings and pet waste off the ground and out of stormwater. Adopt these healthy household habits and help protect our waters.

As a resident, business, or other member of the Helotes community, it is important to know these easy things that you can do every day to protect our water.

## Lawn & Garden

- ↻ Use pesticides and fertilizers sparingly.
- ↻ Do not apply fertilizers if heavy rain is predicted.
- ↻ Look into alternatives for pesticides.
- ↻ Select native plants and grasses that are drought-and-pest-resistant. These require less water, fertilizer and pesticides.
- ↻ Sweep up yard debris, rather than hosing down areas. Compost or recycle yard waste.
- ↻ Use a mulching mower that recycles grass clippings into the lawn.
- ↻ Keep leaves and grass out of storm drains.
- ↻ Do not overwater your lawn. Water during cool times of the day and do not let water runoff into storm drains.
- ↻ Vegetate bare spots in your yard to prevent erosion.



## Home Repair & Improvement

- ↻ Before beginning an outdoor project, locate the nearest storm drains and protect them from debris and other materials.
- ↻ Sweep up and properly dispose of construction debris such as concrete and mortar.
- ↻ Use hazardous products like paints, solvents and cleaning products in the smallest amounts possible. Make sure to store and dispose of them according to label directions.
- ↻ Utilize household hazardous waste disposal programs and facilities to dispose of excess paint or other hazardous waste.
- ↻ Clean paint brushes in a sink, not outdoors.
- ↻ Purchase and use non-toxic, biodegradable, recycled and recyclable products whenever possible.
- ↻ Consider directing downspouts away from paved surfaces onto lawns and other measures to increase infiltration and reduce polluted runoff.

## Vehicle & Garage

- ↻ Wash cars at a commercial car wash or on a lawn or unpaved surface to minimize the amount of dirty, soapy water flowing into the storm drain.
- ↻ Check your car, boat, motorcycle and other machinery and equipment for leaks and spills. Clean up spilled fluids with an absorbent material like kitty litter or sand and dispose of properly.
- ↻ Recycle used motor oil and other automotive fluids at participating service stations. Do not dump these chemicals down the storm drain or dispose of them in your trash.

## Pet Care

- ↻ Pick up and properly dispose of pet waste dropped on public or other people's property.
- ↻ Use newspaper, bags, or pooper scoopers to pick up pet waste.
- ↻ Dispose of the wrapped pet waste in the trash or unwrapped in a toilet.
- ↻ Never discard pet waste in a storm drain.

## Swimming Pool & Spa

- ↻ Drain your pool only when a test kit does not detect chlorine levels.
- ↻ Whenever possible, drain your pool or spa into the sanitary sewer system.
- ↻ Properly store pool and spa chemicals to prevent leaks and spills.

## Septic System Use & Maintenance

- ↻ Have your septic system inspected by a professional at least every 3 years and have the septic tank pumped as necessary (usually every 3 to 5 years).
- ↻ Care for the septic system drainfield by not driving or parking vehicles on it. Avoid planting trees near septic systems to prevent damage from roots.
- ↻ Flush responsibly. Flushing household cleaners and liquids, including cooking grease, can destroy the biological treatment taking place in your septic system. Other items such as diapers, paper towels and cat litter can clog the system and potentially damage components.

## Get Involved

- ↻ Do not litter!
- ↻ Recycle! Recycle! Recycle!
- ↻ Participate in community volunteer clean up days.

You will make a difference! Keeping our creeks, streams, lakes and rivers clean and safe will be a tough challenge as our community grows. In Helotes, we're up for the task, but we can't do it without everyone's help. The choices we make today will impact future generations. As a community, we are responsible for maintaining the quality of our waterways. Please do your part to help minimize stormwater pollution. *Be the solution to stormwater pollution!*

**Only rain down the drain!**  
Storm drains connect to waterbodies!

For more information on stormwater related topics, visit [www.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater](http://www.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater) or visit the City's website for more local information at [www.helotes-tx.gov](http://www.helotes-tx.gov).