

Stormwater Best Management Practices

Best Management Practices (BMPs) can minimize stormwater pollution. Different BMPs serve different purposes; some stop pollution at the source, others minimize the likelihood of pollution, minimize stormwater infiltration of pollutants or maximize water conservation and proper waste disposal.

The best way to keep stormwater pollution from degrading Shelter Island's bays is to implement good housekeeping and pollution prevention practices at your home or business by considering *BMPs* to prevent stormwater pollution.

Each of us can make a difference by following these simple guidelines:

- *Inspect and maintain your car regularly to prevent oil, antifreeze, and other fluid leaks.
- *Take used motor oil, antifreeze, and other fluids to an automotive center with a recycling program or to your *town's recycling center*.
- *Have fluid leaks repaired promptly. Use kitty litter to soak up leaks and spills. Dispose of swept debris in the trash. Never dump oil or hose wastewater from oil spills into storm drains.
- *Take your car to a self-service car wash that recycles and treats the wash water.
- *Wash your car on your lawn and let the nutrient rich, soapy water fertilize your lawn. Avoid washing your car on the driveway or street. Car wash water that enters storm drains flows to local lakes, estuaries, and embayments adding excess nutrients to the water, which causes harmful algal blooms.
- *Use household hazardous chemicals sparingly or not at all. Always use chemicals in accordance with instructions on the label.
- *Search for alternatives that are non-toxic, non-hazardous, readily biodegradable, and/or have recycled content. These products are readily available at many grocery stores. Don't forget, you can always make your own cleaning solution with products you probably have in your cupboards!
- *Always dispose of these products responsibly. For more information of Shelter Island's recycling and "Stop Throwing Out Pollutants" or S.T.O.P. program, check out:

<http://www.shelterislandtown.us/hwyrecycle.ihtml> .

*Never dump household hazardous wastes down the drain or in a storm drain! Doing so endangers the quality of our surface waters, damages septic tanks, and wastewater treatment plants.

*Avoid blowing lawn clippings into the street or dumping grass clippings down storm drains. Leaves or grass clippings that enter storm drains eventually discharge to local waterbodies, providing surface waters with excess nutrients. Excess nutrients are released as bacteria decompose leaves, grass, and other biodegradable material. This can cause algae blooms and reduce oxygen levels. The resulting low oxygen levels (hypoxia) can result in wildlife and sea grass mortalities.

*Leave grass clippings on your lawn after mowing. The nutrients in the clippings provide the best and cheapest fertilizer for your lawn. For more information see Cornell Cooperative Extension's web page "Just mow it: A Guide to Grass Recycling"

*Collect debris from your driveway and sidewalk by sweeping with a broom and dispose of in the trash properly. Grass and leaves can be swept and reapplied to your lawn. Do not use water to hose your driveway. The water can carry dirt, oils, and pet waste directly into storm drains and eventually surface waters.

*Composting is another way to use leaves and grass clippings. Mixing with household waste such as vegetable scraps and eggshells creates a soil compost material that is great for flower beds and potting soil.

*When walking your dog, always carry a pooper scooper or plastic bag to pick up pet waste. Place your hand in a plastic bag, pick up waste, then turn the bag inside out, seal and dispose of.

*Properly dispose of pet waste by flushing it down toilet or putting it in trash. Look for pet waste receptacles at public parks and other public areas.

*Diseases and parasites can be transmitted from pets to humans if pet waste is not disposed of properly.

*Pet waste contains nutrients that promote algae growth that can result in poor water quality.

*When washing your pet, use non-toxic and biodegradable pet shampoos. If you must bathe your pet outside, wash your pet on the lawn instead of on a paved driveway. Follow instructions and clean up any spills.