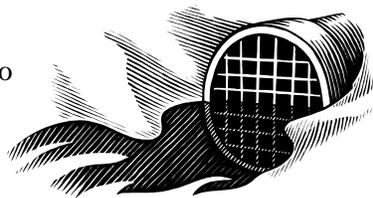


Be A Storm Drain Steward

The Facts

Storm drains are openings constructed in streets and roadways that help to prevent flooding by allowing rain water and melting snow to drain away. Storm drains are usually found along the curb line, many times at an intersection. Curbs and gutters help to direct water from the street into the storm drain.



As storm drains collect water from the street, they also take in anything that the stormwater carries with it. Most water that goes into a storm drain gets no treatment before it is discharged into a water body – a pond, ditch, stream, or river. That means that anything that goes into the storm drain can pollute the environment. Some of the common pollutants found in stormwater include: lawn chemicals such as fertilizer and pesticides, bacteria from pet waste, household chemicals, soaps used for washing cars, and dirt, soil and sediment. Even products that are labeled as biodegradable or non-toxic can cause damage to waterways and can harm aquatic life.



Storm drains are not intended to be the neighborhood trash can. Nothing should be dumped down a storm drain. Chemicals, paint or other pollutants can go directly into a stream or water body. Trash, even leaves and grass clippings, can cause the storm drain to become clogged, resulting in street flooding.

How Can You Help?

You can help prevent water pollution and reduce street flooding by being a storm drain steward.

- Do not dump anything into the storm drain, and never throw trash into the street.
- Latex paint can be disposed of by opening the cans to let the paint dry out, then putting the cans in the trash.
- Oil paint, household chemicals, cleaning products and old lawn chemicals should be stored then taken to the Allen County Solid Waste Management District's Tox-Away Day. This event is usually held in September and is publicized in the newspaper and on television.
- Recycle used oil at an automotive center. Do not dump it in the storm drain or into the trash.
- Consider using a commercial car wash rather than washing your car in the driveway or street.
- Sweep sidewalks and driveways to remove dirt and other debris so that it is not washed into the street and storm sewer by the rain.
- Use lawn chemicals sparingly. More is not necessarily better. You can save yourself money by using the right amount and making sure it all gets on the lawn, not the sidewalk or driveway.
- Pick up after your pet.
- Keep leaves and grass clippings out of the street. If your street is flooding, check to see if the storm drain is blocked by yard waste and clean it off, if possible.
- Mark the storm drains in your neighborhood as a reminder to be a Storm Drain Steward. Contact Fort Wayne City Utilities at 427-6213 for more information.

