



Protecting Water Quality from URBAN RUNOFF

A Pollution Prevention Guide for Local Businesses



Many Iowa communities are regulated to improve storm water draining into their storm sewer system through the federal NPDES program, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System. Through this permit program it is illegal, as well as possibly harmful, to discharge wastes, cleaning agents, or materials of any kind to the storm drain system.

The most recent National Water Quality Inventory reports that runoff from urbanized areas is the leading source of water quality impairments to surveyed estuaries and the third-largest source of impairments to surveyed lakes.



Did you know?

Since dumpsters are rarely water-tight, when dumpster lids are not closed or secured, rain water that comes into contact with trash inside can wash off oils, inks, and other materials. This water can then leak out of the dumpster, carrying possible toxins into our streams and rivers.



Power washing oil soaked or debris covered pavements with traditional cleaners washes harmful oils and grease from cars, copper and asbestos from break linings, and zinc from tires. Phosphates and other chemicals from many detergents can harm aquatic life.



Thermal pollution is also a concern, weather it is from a small or large parking lot. As water hits the pavement heat transfers from the pavement to the water with the hot runoff flowing directly to the closest stream, which is also detrimental to fish and other aquatic life.

Deteriorating grass clippings or leaves blown into the street get washed into the storm drain system when it rains and deplete the amount of oxygen available to fish and other aquatic life.



What can you and your business do to protect water quality?

- 💧 Sweep up spills rather than washing them down the drain.
- 💧 Sweep parking lots to remove trash and debris periodically and before washing.
- 💧 Use phosphorus free, bio-degradable cleaning products when washing vehicles or pavements.
- 💧 Do not mow or blow yard waste into the street. Sweep up and compost grass clippings.
- 💧 Keep dumpster lids closed or covered with a tarp.
- 💧 Rather than shedding rain, there are many ways to use infiltration based best management practices that help protect water quality. The expanse of concrete or asphalt parking lots are a great place to start—either from scratch or as a retrofit project. A second opportunity to infiltrate is the green space found in parking islands and the perimeter around the car lot.



For more information and other water quality improvement techniques please visit: www.cedarfalls.com or one of our education partners:



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