

HOW DO STORM SEWERS WORK?

The importance of storm water pollution prevention and what you can do to help keep our campus and waterways clean.

“While The Ohio State University occupies one of the largest land areas of any institution in America, it is an urban campus with finite resources and environmental characteristics that must be preserved.”

— *Ohio State Master Plan*

Rainwater and water from vehicle washing and over-irrigation flow into storm drains located in parking lots, streets, and gutters. These drains are connected through a series of underground pipes that carry water directly to our rivers, lakes, and streams.

Unlike the sanitary sewer that carries water from the drains in your home to the wastewater treatment plant, the storm sewer system carries untreated water straight to the river. Everything that goes into a storm drain is discharged into our waterways.

This means that litter (including face masks), oil, antifreeze from a leaky car, pet waste, and household cleaners dumped on the ground could find their way into the river. These pollutants have harmful effects on water quality and wildlife.

A FEW OF THE THINGS YOU CAN DO TO PREVENT STORM WATER POLLUTION

DON'T LITTER — Litter in lawns, parking areas, and streets will wash into the storm sewer and eventually find its way to waterways. Putting trash into plastic bags will reduce the likelihood that litter will blow out of a trash can or dumpster.

FACE MASKS — While face masks can protect from disease, you can help protect the environment by properly disposing of soiled, torn, or saturated masks in the trash, not on the ground.



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

Environmental Health and Safety
ehs.osu.edu
614-292-1284

COMMON URBAN POLLUTANTS

HOUSEHOLD

- Cleaners
- Detergents
- Face Masks
- Paint - Latex & Oil-Based
- Solvents
- Trash and Litter

LAWN CARE

- Fertilizer
- Grass Clippings
- Herbicides
- Insecticides
- Leaves
- Sediment from Erosion
- Pesticides
- Pet Waste

AUTOMOTIVE

- Antifreeze
- Brake Pad Dust
- Cleaning Fluids
- Oil and Grease
- Radiator Fluids

DON'T OVERFILL DUMPSTERS — If you are an on-campus student or staff member and your dumpster is full, contact your Building Coordinator or Service2Facilities (614-292-HELP, email service2facilities@osu.edu). Off-campus students should contact their landlord or building manager to have dumpsters emptied.

REPORT POLLUTERS — Dumping litter or hazardous substances into storm sewers is illegal. If you see a potentially hazardous substance entering a storm sewer or someone dumping oil, trash, or other materials, notify the appropriate office (below) to report such activities.

ON-CAMPUS

Chemical Spills and Emergencies 9-1-1
Environmental Health and Safety 614-292-1284
Service2Facilities 614-292-HELP (4357)

OFF-CAMPUS

Chemical Spills and Emergencies 9-1-1
Columbus Storm Water Hot-line 614-645-7873
Franklin County Health Department 614-462-3160
Ohio EPA Spill Hot-line 800-282-9378

REGIONAL CAMPUSES

Lima Public Safety Department 419-995-8499
Mansfield Safety and Security 419-755-4346
Marion Public Safety Department 740-725-6300
Newark Public Safety Department 740-366-9237
Wooster Public Safety Department 330-202-3513

CLEAN UP AFTER PETS — Pet waste contains bacteria that are harmful to aquatic wildlife. Waste that is not picked up can wash into the storm sewer during rainfall events. Pick up pet waste as soon as possible and dispose of it in a toilet or in plastic bags in the trash.

PAINT WASTE — If you paint, don't wash off the brushes or rollers in the driveway, parking lot, or gutter. Even water-based paints contain chemicals that are harmful to the environment. These chemicals will wash into the storm drains and find their way to the river.



PROPERLY DISPOSE OF HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES THROUGH A HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTION PROGRAM.

ON CAMPUS

Follow university procedures for the handling and disposal of all hazardous substances or wastes generated at the university. Contact Ohio State's Environmental Health Safety group at 614-292-1284 if you have any questions regarding the handling or disposal of hazardous substances or wastes on campus.

IN THE HOME

Columbus has an established Household Hazardous Waste Collection Program. For information, call 614-871-5100 or visit columbus.gov/publicservice/RecyColumbus/Household-Hazardous-Waste/.

HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES — If you use hazardous substances, such as oil-based paints, solvents, or cleaners, use them sparingly and in accordance with instructions on the manufacturer's label. Store them properly to avoid spilling. In the event of a spill, use absorbent material such as cat litter to clean up the substance and dispose of the waste through a hazardous waste collection program.

CAR MAINTENANCE — Check your car regularly for leaks and make necessary repairs. Clean up spills or leaks with absorbent material such as cat litter and dispose of the waste through a hazardous waste collection program.

When you change the fluids in your car, drain them into a clean and tightly sealed container. Never pour any automotive fluids down a storm drain, onto the ground, or in parking lots or driveways. Take the used oil and filter to a used oil collection site. Many automotive parts stores and service stations accept oil from the general public for recycling.

WASH YOUR CAR IN THE GRASS — Detergents and road salt are harmful to aquatic wildlife and should not be discharged into waterways.

GET INVOLVED — There are several ways you can participate in efforts to reduce storm water pollution.

Join one of Ohio State's many organizations that focus on environmental issues. A list of all student organizations is available on the Office of Student Life website at go.osu.edu/student-org.

You can also participate with grassroots organizations dedicated to improving the central Ohio environment. One of the most active organizations is the Friends of the Lower Olentangy Watershed (FLOW). FLOW organizes many activities such as litter clean-up, invasive species eradication, and native tree planting that have a direct benefit to the environment and the water quality of the Olentangy River. More information is available at olentangywatershed.org. Students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to contact similar organizations in their area.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT STORM WATER MANAGEMENT, PLEASE CONTACT:

Columbus Division of Sewers and Drains at 614-645-7175 or columbus.gov/utilities.
Ohio's Environmental Protection Agency at 800-686-2330 or epa.ohio.gov/dsw/storm/index.
The Ohio State University Environmental Health and Safety at 614-292-1284 or ehs.osu.edu/storm-water-management-program.

