

# Cornwall Borough Spring MS4 Maintenance Guide

## Why Should You Care About Stormwater Pollution?

Stormwater picks up sediment, grass clippings, oil, fertilizer, pesticides, and other pollutants as it travels to local waterways through the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4). These pollutants degrade the quality of local waterways such as the Snitz Creek and Quitapahilla Creek, and waterways downstream such as the Susquehanna River and Chesapeake Bay. Water quality degradation affects fish and their habitats, aquatic ecosystems, and our use of the water for fishing, swimming, and other recreational activities. The more polluted our surface waters are, the more it costs to treat that water before it can be used in our homes and businesses.



*Photo Credit: EPA*

## What Can You Do To Reduce Stormwater Pollution?

Spring is a great time to make simple changes to your lifestyle to reduce stormwater pollution. Here are a few ways to start:

- 1. Keep Grass Clippings Off The Street!** Grass clippings contain high levels of nitrogen and phosphorus which fuel algae growth and deplete the oxygen available to fish. Grass clippings blown into the street can easily wash into the MS4 and into local streams. Instead of blowing them into the street, consider mulching grass clippings to provide free fertilizer for your lawn or garden.
- 2. Use Fertilizers, Pesticides, And Herbicides Sparingly.** Read the manufacturer's labels carefully and don't over-apply these chemicals, which again can reach local streams and disrupt ecosystems. Consider mulching your grass to use as fertilizer and pulling weeds by hand, both of which will save you money.

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## What Can You Do To Reduce Stormwater Pollution?

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- 3. Clean Up After Your Pet.** Pet waste is a potential source of diseases and algae-fueling nutrients. Always clean up after your pet, even in your own backyard.
- 4. Take Advantage Of Local Hazardous Waste Collections.** Never dispose of chemicals like motor oil, antifreeze, paint, or household cleaners outdoors or down a storm drain. The Greater Lebanon Refuse Authority sponsors a Household Hazardous Waste Collection program where each Lebanon County residence is entitled to one pick-up per year for a copay of \$15. This cost is well worth it for the safe disposal of this hazardous waste. Call 1-800-449-7587 to schedule a pickup.



Household Hazardous Waste

*Photo Credit: EPA*



Residential Rain Garden

*Photo Credit: MA Watershed Coalition*

- 5. Maintain Your Stormwater BMPs.** Best Management Practices (BMPs) such as rain gardens and detention basins improve water quality and reduce flooding. If you own a BMP, make sure that it is kept free of debris, that the vegetation is kept in good condition, and that any structures such as pipes or inlets are repaired if damaged.
- 6. Wash Your Vehicles At A Local Car Wash, Not In Your Driveway.** Detergents and soaps contain chemicals that are harmful to fish and aquatic wildlife. Instead of washing your car in the driveway where the soapy runoff can reach streams, use a local car wash where the wash water is collected and treated as wastewater. You'll also be supporting a local business.