

# What Can We Do?

## What can we do about storm water pollution?

Everyone can do something to reduce storm water pollution

Some people are quick to complain about water pollution, especially when it affects their favorite river, lake or beach. They may not realize that they may be contributing to this pollution when they tip harmful materials down the drain or carelessly drop litter on the road. The reality is that we all have an impact on storm water quality, and we can all take steps to make a difference. You could make a difference just by changing the way you do something, like washing your car or walking your dog. Activities which seem harmless or insignificant on a small scale can have an enormous cumulative impact on our waterways. Imagine thousands of people in the streets around you dropping a cigarette butt from their cars, sweeping dirt off their driveways or washing detergent off their cars down the street drains. It all ends up in the water.

### Benefits for everyone

Whether you live close to the water, or only visit lakes, rivers, the harbor or beaches occasionally, reduced storm water pollution will lead to many ongoing benefits for the environment and for all of us:

- rivers, lakes and beaches will be cleaner and safer for swimming
- waterways will look cleaner: there will be fewer plastic bags and other pollution visible in the water
- ratepayers will spend less money on emptying storm water traps
- the environment will be healthier for plants and animals

### What we can do at home

#### In the Garden

##### **Do**

sweep the gutters and driveways regularly and place the sweepings on the garden, compost or in the bin

prevent soil or mulch from being washed or blown off the garden

rake up leaves or lawn clippings and use them as mulch on the garden or place them in the compost

grass or re-plant areas of disturbed soil

consider natural alternatives to pest control chemicals

##### **Don't**

don't hose dirt off hard surfaces (roads, paths, driveways) into gutters

don't hose leaves and grass clippings into gutters

don't pile sand and soil on areas where it can wash into the storm water system

don't overuse chemicals (pesticides and herbicides) that could be washed into storm water from the garden or yard

don't use too much fertilizer



### In the Street

#### Do

pick up litter in the park or on the street

clean up pet droppings and dispose of them in the garden, rubbish bins, or in the toilet.

#### Don't

don't drop packaging or cigarette butts on the ground

don't leave rubbish where bins are already full



### With the Car

#### Do

maintain the car, making sure there are no leaks and that fuel is burnt 'cleanly' by keeping your car tuned

use the minimum amount of detergent for cleaning outside, and wash your car on the grass or on gravel. A better option is to take your car to a car wash, where the water is recycled.

#### Don't

don't work on your car (including oil changing) in a place where oil and grease may wash into gutters

don't wash the car in the street using detergent



### Renovating

#### Do

wash brushes and rollers over a sand filter on the lawn

keep paint, tarps and solvents clear of gutters or drain

reuse tarps once the paint has settled

allow unused paint to dry out and then put it in the bin

#### Don't

don't wash out cement mixers or barrows so that the waste flows into street drain

don't hose sand, gravel or cement into the gutter

don't leave piles of sand or gravel uncovered where it could wash or blow into the gutter

