



HOME MAINTENANCE TIPS



Car Washing & Repair

If you do the work yourself:

- Don't wash cars on a driveway or street where soapy water may flow to a storm drain. Wash on a lawn or unpaved surface. Dispose of leftover soapy water in a sink or toilet, not the street, driveway, or storm drain.
- If you change your own oil or antifreeze, recycle it! Never dump oil or any auto fluid onto the ground or into a storm drain or creek.
- Repair leaking vehicles promptly to help keep fluids off streets and out of storm drains. Soak up leaks and spills with an absorbent such as cat litter.

If you hire someone:

- Use a commercial car wash where water is recycled.
- Make sure mobile auto detailers use spill containment aids such as drop cloths when working in a street or driveway, and dispose of all wastewater in a sink, not the storm drain.
- Be sure your auto service center recycles oil and antifreeze, and follows shop cleanup practices that protect water quality.

Painting & Furniture Stripping

If you do the work yourself:

- Never clean brushes or rinse paint containers into a street, gutter, storm drain, or creek.
- Clean latex paint from brushes and containers in a sink. Filter, settle, and reuse thinners and solvents for oil-based paints.
- Dispose of unusable paints and thinners, thinner residue, and paint strippers at a household hazardous waste collection event.
- Empty, dry paint cans may go in household garbage, or they may be recycled. Remove paint can lids before disposal.

If you hire someone:

- Make sure that painting contractors clean brushes and containers and dispose of paint residues properly - never in the street or storm drain.
- Professional painters must dispose of leftover paints and solvents as hazardous waste.
- Contractors should use plastic sheeting or a drop cloth to collect chips and dust from non-hazardous dry stripping and sand blasting. Then sweep up and dispose of debris as trash.

Housecleaning & Window Washing

If you do the work yourself:

- Send dirty cleaning water down a sink or toilet, not into a street, gutter, or storm drain.
- Make sure trash can lids are tightly closed and recyclables are secured to prevent materials from blowing onto the ground.

If you hire someone:

- Make sure people you hire understand that storm drains flow to the creeks with no treatment so they won't dump anything into the street, gutter, or storm drain.
- Make sure people you hire dispose of potentially toxic materials properly.

Carpet/Upholstery Cleaning

If you do the work yourself:

- Dispose of dirty cleaning solution down a sink or toilet, not in the street or storm drain.

If you hire someone:

- Ask professional carpet cleaners where they empty their tanks. Make sure they don't use the storm drain.
- Professionals should dispose of cleaning solutions down a sink or toilet, or return to their company for disposal to the sanitary sewer.

Concrete, Masonry, and Asphalt Repair

If you do the work yourself:

- Set up and operate small mixers on heavy tarps or drop cloths.
- Plan ahead, mix only as much concrete, mortar, or plaster as you need that day.
- Hose down mixers, tools, and trailers in a dirt area where rinse water won't run into a creek or gutter.
- Clean up with a broom, not a hose! Or wash fine particles onto a dirt area- not into a street or gutter.
- Apply driveway sealants when no rain is forecast. Sweep first to prepare. Handle sealants with care and follow label directions.

If you hire someone:

- Explain to your concrete contractor that rinsing trucks or equipment in the street or near a storm drain endangers wildlife in our creeks and it's illegal!

Make sure your concrete contractor:

1. Establishes a cleanup area before starting work.
2. Minimizes use of water in cleanup.
3. Rinses equipment onto an isolated dirt area, away from streets or creeks. Or places a wheelbarrow under the chute and/or other equipment to catch rinse water, and wheels it to a dirt area for disposal.
4. Rinses exposed aggregate onto a dirt area.

Pool/Spa Maintenance

If you do the work yourself:

- Control algae by regulating chlorine levels and by using a pool cover to block sunlight. DO NOT use copper-based algae control products.
- Dispose of filter rinse water and backwash into soil, not the gutter, creek, or storm drain.

If you hire someone:

- Make sure your pool service contractor is not using copper products in your pool, and not disposing of filter backwash where it can run off to a storm drain.
- Make sure acid-wash rinse water is neutralized before it is pumped to the sewer line cleanout. Call your wastewater treatment plant for guidance.

Lawn & Garden Care and Pest Control

- Make sure no leaves are blown or raked into the street or gutter. Collect yard waste for composting.
- Limit fertilizer applications to twice a year and limit application of all chemicals such as pesticides and herbicides.

Remember to clean up all spills when they happen! If building materials or other wastes get into a gutter, storm drain, or creek call Stormwater Hotline at (580) 581-3565.