

Learn How to Help Prevent Ocean Pollution

Runoff Scavenger Hunt – What is in your neighborhood?

What is Runoff? Runoff is water from rain and outdoor water use that drains from roofs, driveways, streets and other areas that don't soak water into the ground. As runoff flows over surfaces it will pick up and carry pollutants to the storm drain. In Orange County, the storm drains carry runoff to local waterways, like the Santa Ana River, where it flows untreated to the ocean.

Directions: Take a walk around your neighborhood and search for items that cause ocean pollution and find your neighborhood storm drain system.

How many can you find?

Common Pollutants in Runoff		
 pet waste	 engine oil	 paint
 yard debris	 trash	 fertilizers
These common pollutants are washed by rain, hoses and sprinklers and runoff into the storm drain. These drains make up the storm drain system. Can you find them?		
 curbs/gutters	 storm drain	 yard drain



YOU ARE THE SOLUTION TO RUNOFF POLLUTION



TRASH

If trash such as cigarette butts, straws, cups, and other debris enter our waterways, it can create water flow problems and contaminate aquatic habitats. Always properly dispose of waste and recyclables and secure your trash can lid to prevent trash from being released into the environment.



ENGINE OIL

If engine oil enters our waterways, aquatic animals and plants can be negatively affected. It is important to repair leaking vehicles as soon as possible. Clean affected areas utilizing absorbents available at auto and home supply stores. Be sure to follow manufacturer's directions for proper use and disposal of absorbent. Used engine oil can be disposed of at a Household Hazardous Waste Center (HHWC*) or where oil was purchased.



PET WASTE

Pet waste is a threat to human and environmental health because it contains harmful bacteria and pathogens. Being a responsible pet owner means picking up after your pet on walks and in your yard, especially before it rains.



YARD DEBRIS

If yard debris reaches local waterways, it can obstruct stormwater flow, clog storm drains, and cause other problems like flooding and erosion. Be sure to collect all debris when doing yard work and properly dispose of it in a green waste bin, or better yet, compost it.



FERTILIZER

If improperly applied, fertilizers can enter our waterways and cause ecological problems. For proper application, follow the manufacturer's instructions and stop applying fertilizers 48 hours before a forecasted rain event.



PESTICIDES

If pesticides, which include herbicides, insecticides, fungicides, and rodenticides, enter our waterways, they can be dangerous to human health and aquatic life. Be sure to limit pesticide use by using nonchemical methods or least-toxic pesticides whenever possible and contact the University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) Master Gardeners** with any questions. To properly apply pesticides, follow the manufacturer's instructions and stop applying 48 hours before a forecasted rain event.



PAINT

Paints, and related materials, contain a wide range of chemicals. These products should never be put in storm drains, sewers or septic systems. Instead, dispose of unused paint at your local HHWC*.



DETERGENTS

If phosphorus from detergents enters our waterways, it can cause ecological problems, including fish kills. Additionally, detergents can remove the protective mucous layer from fish, leaving them susceptible to disease. When using detergents for outdoor cleaning projects, do not allow wash water to reach the storm drain system.



HOME SOLVENTS

Many common household cleaning products contain harmful chemicals which are toxic and volatile. If not used and disposed of properly, these chemicals enter our waterways and pose a threat to both human and aquatic life. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions and dispose of the material at your local HHWC*.