

The Ocean Begins at Your Front Door



Even though you live miles from the Pacific Ocean, you may be polluting it without knowing it.

Before you pour anything into the gutter or down the drain, stop and think! Storm drains go directly into channels and creeks.....and through wetlands and bays to the ocean.

Did You Know...

- ❖ Anything we use in our home, car and business like motor oil, paint, pesticides, fertilizers and cleaners can wind up in the street.
- ❖ A little water from rain or a garden hose can carry automotive and house hold materials through the storm drain polluting bays, wetlands and the ocean. Storm drains are there to drain water off the street-not for disposal of hazardous materials.
- ❖ Dumping one quart of motor oil down a storm drain contaminates 250,000 gallons of water.
- ❖ Because storm drains are separate from our sewer system, Storm Water & Urban Runoff Pollution can flow into the ocean without treatment.

Where Does It Go?

These pollutants flow together on a journey from the storm drain to the flood control channel where it can eventually empty into the ocean. This type of pollution is called Storm Water & Urban Runoff Pollution and is a serious threat to the beaches and ocean of Southern California.

What Is Storm Water & Urban Runoff Pollution

Storm water runoff refers to seasonal rainfall flows. It is very noticeable during a heavy rain storm when large volumes of water drain off paved areas. Urban runoff can happen anytime of the year when excessive water use from irrigation, car washing and other sources carries litter, lawn clippings and other urban pollutants into storm drains. Even an automobile leaking motor oil 20 miles inland can still pollute the ocean.

How Is It Different From Other Forms of Water Pollution?

SWURP can include anything that washes into the storm drain from the community.

Unlike water pollution linked to factories or sewage treatment plants, SWURP can come from city streets, neighborhoods, farms, construction sites and parking lots.

Where Storm Water & Urban Runoff Pollution Comes From

- Automotive leaks and spills.
- Improper disposal of used oil and other engine fluids down the storm drain.
- Metals found in vehicle exhaust, weathered paint, rust, metal plating and tires.
- Pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers from lawns, gardens and farms.
- Improper disposal of cleaners, paint and paint removers.
- Soil erosion and dust debris from landscape and construction activities.
- Litter, lawn clippings, animal waste and other organic matter.
- Oil stains on parking lots and paved surfaces.

Storm Water & Urban Runoff Pollution and The Ocean

SWURP may have a serious impact on water quality in Orange County. Pollutants from the storm drain system can harm marine life as well as coastal and wetland habitats. It can also degrade recreation areas such as beaches, harbors and bays.

Storm Water Quality Management Programs have been developed by the Orange County Public Facilities & Resources Department, local cities, and other agencies which participate in the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). Their responsibilities involve encouraging the public to help protect water quality, monitoring runoff in the storm drain system, managing NPDES permit process for municipalities, investigating illegal disposals and maintaining storm drains.

The support of Orange County residents, businesses and industries is needed to improve water quality and reduce the threat of Storm Water & Urban

Runoff Pollution (SWURP). Proper use and disposal of materials we use everyday will help stop this form of pollution before it reaches the storm drain and the ocean.