## Did You Know?

- There are an estimated 74.8 million dogs owned in the United States, which create 72.5 billion pounds of dog waste every year (not to mention waste generated by cats, horses, livestock and wild animals)!
- Just one gram of pet waste contains an average of 23 million fecal coliform bacteria. Some of these bacteria can cause serious gastrointestinal infections, as well as infections to the ear, eye, and throat in humans.
- As pet waste decomposes, it demands a high level of oxygen from water. This demand can suffocate fish and plant life by reducing the amount of oxygen available to them. Pet waste also contains nutrients that encourage weed and algae growth.
- While pet waste may not be the largest or most toxic pollutant in our waterways, it is one of many sources of pollution that add up to a big problem. And, it is one of the easiest sources of pollution to prevent.

## PLEASE REMEMBER...

*The Code of the Town of Oyster Bay, Chapter 181-6, prohibits illegal or "illicit discharges" to storm drain systems, punishable by fine and/or imprisonment.*

*Regarding pet waste, Town Code, Chapter 103-5, mandates that dog waste on a public street must be immediately removed in a plastic bag.*

*Bagged or unbagged pet waste thrown in storm drains, grates, openings, or manholes is an example of an illegal discharge, which is a major cause of water pollution.*


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# Pet Waste, Pathogens & Storm Water Pollution

## What *You* Can Do to Prevent It!

**www.oysterbaytown.com**

# What You Can Do To Protect Water Quality

## Storm Water Pollution: What Is It?

Storm water is runoff from rain and snowmelt. Under natural conditions, this water seeps into the ground. In suburban areas, this water flows over impervious surfaces (paved areas and building rooftops), does not percolate into the ground, and accumulates debris, chemicals, sediment or other pollutants, including pathogens, as it makes its way to the storm drainage system.

## What is a Pathogen?

A pathogen is an infectious agent, such as a bacterium, virus or fungus, that causes diseases if someone comes in contact with it. Pathogens are commonly associated with animal waste and human sewage.

## The Problem

Storm drains are not connected to wastewater treatment plants or septic systems. Anything that enters the storm water drainage system is discharged, untreated, directly into the water you use for swimming, fishing and recreation. Some common sources of pathogens that can degrade water quality are:

- Dog Waste
- Horse waste
- Livestock waste
- Geese and other wildlife waste
- Septic systems/cesspools

Pet waste is a threat to human and environmental health because it contains harmful pathogens, some of which can cause serious diseases in humans. Pet waste also contains many other nutrient pollutants, which contribute to excessive algae growth in water bodies, upsetting the delicate balance of the natural habitat.

When pet waste is tossed into a storm drain or left on the sidewalk, street or yard, it is carried by rainwater through the storm drain system directly into our local water bodies, without any treatment. Once there, the pollution it causes can result in beach, fishing and shellfish area closures.

## The Solution

With these few simple steps, you can help reduce pathogens in storm water:

### *Dogs and Cats:*

- **It's the law!** Always clean up after your pet.
- **Flush It:** The best way to dispose of pet waste is to flush it down the toilet. Just remember to remove the waste from the bag or the litter before putting it in the toilet. Used litter should be placed in a securely closed plastic bag and placed in the trash.
- **Scoop the Poop:** Bag it and put it in the trash. The Town's solid waste is taken to a landfill, which is designed to safely handle substances such as dog waste and cat litter.

### *Horses and Livestock:*

- Clean up manure and soiled bedding on a regular basis.
- Store manure piles under cover and away from creeks and other drainage areas.
- Direct storm water away from manure piles.

### *Geese and Wildlife:*

- Do not feed waterfowl and other wildlife. Under Town Code, Chapter 103-20, it is illegal to feed migratory waterfowl on any land owned, maintained, leased or managed by the Town of Oyster Bay.

### *Septic Systems and Cesspools:*

- Have your system inspected every three years by a professional.
- Pump your septic tank as necessary, generally every three to five years.
- Avoid driving or parking vehicles on your drainfield.
- Plant only grass over and near your drainfield to avoid damage to your septic tank or cesspool from tree/shrub roots.