

## HOME REPAIR AND IMPROVEMENT

When undertaking any outdoor home improvement or landscaping project, consider the following:

- Before beginning any outdoor project, locate the nearest storm drains and protect them from debris.
- Sweep up, and properly dispose of, construction debris, such as concrete and mortar.
- Use hazardous substances, such as paints, solvents and cleaners, in the smallest amounts possible and follow directions on the label. Clean up spills immediately and dispose of waste safely through the Town's S.T.O.P. program. Store substances properly to avoid leaks and spills.
- Purchase and use non-toxic, biodegradable, recycled and recyclable products whenever possible.
- Clean paint brushes in a sink, not outdoors. Filter and reuse paint thinner when using oil-based paints. Properly dispose of excess paints through the Town's S.T.O.P. program.
- Direct downspouts away from paved surfaces.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT:

[www.oysterbaytown.com](http://www.oysterbaytown.com)

OR

[www.epa.gov/nps](http://www.epa.gov/nps)

OR

[www.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater](http://www.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater)

Town Supervisor  
**JOHN VENDITTO**

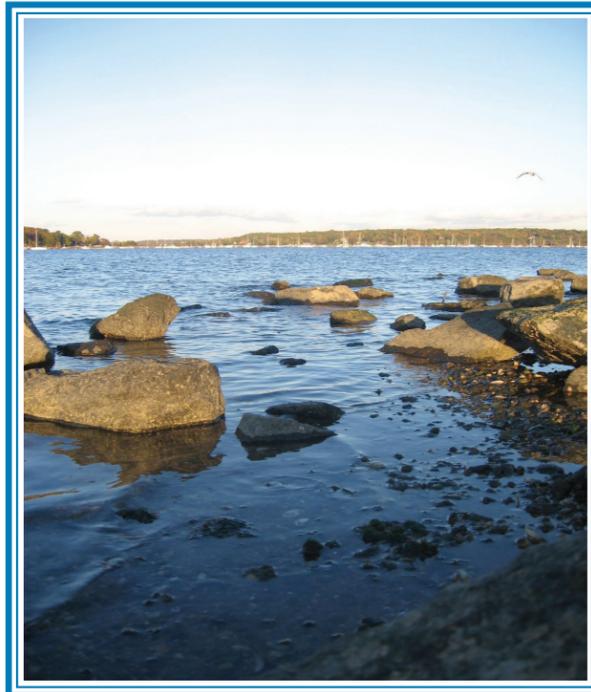


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MAKE YOUR HOME THE SOLUTION  
TO STORM WATER POLLUTION.

# A Resident's Guide to Understanding **STORM WATER RUNOFF POLLUTION**



## Help Protect Our Water by Making Your Home the Solution to Storm Water Pollution

Web Site Address:  
[www.oysterbaytown.com](http://www.oysterbaytown.com)

## A MESSAGE FROM TOWN SUPERVISOR JOHN VENDITTO



Dear Resident,

Storm water pollution...while many people are familiar with the term, many more are not. Storm water pollution is caused by the daily activities of people everywhere. Rainwater and snowmelt run off streets, lawns, farms, and construction and industrial sites, picking up fertilizers, dirt, pesticides, oil, grease and many other pollutants along the way and then deposit them in our waterways. It is not hard to see why storm water pollution is one of our most challenging water quality problems.

Because storm water pollution is caused by so many different activities, traditional regulatory controls can go only so far. Education and outreach are the key components to stemming storm water pollution, which is why the Town developed this brochure. The information contained in the following pages is designed to acquaint you with the problem of storm water runoff and to teach you ways you can help mitigate storm water runoff pollution around your home.

Preserving and enhancing water quality is an environmental legacy for which I would like my administration to be remembered. To this end, a number of projects designed to mitigate storm water runoff have been, and are being, undertaken by the Town on both the north and south shores. To date, the Town has completed storm water runoff mitigation projects on Sewanhaka Place in Oyster Bay hamlet, Stehli Beach, Turtle Cove in Bayville, Tappen Beach in Glenwood Landing and TR Roosevelt Park and Marina. Additionally, recent construction of a synthetic turf field at Centre Island Beach will help to reduce fertilizers and geese droppings entering waterbodies. Other north shore projects recommended in the Harbor Management Plan for the Oyster Bay/Cold Spring Harbor Complex are in the planning stage. Projects for the south shore include Marjorie R. Post Community Park, stormwater treatment devices to outfalls in Massapequa, construction of synthetic turf fields at Burns Park, and several recommended in the South Shore Estuary Reserve Comprehensive Management Plan. The South Shore Harbor Management Plan will also address storm water runoff mitigation.

As stewards of valuable coastal resources and recreation areas, the Town recognizes its obligation to counteract their degradation by the impacts of human facilities and activities. We have made a commitment to take whatever steps necessary to preserve and enhance these resources. The completed and planned storm water runoff mitigation projects will go a long way toward reducing the pollutant load in our waterways, but we need your help. I hope you will take the time to read this brochure and learn how you, too, can become part of the solution to storm water runoff pollution.

### WHAT IS STORM WATER RUNOFF?

Storm water runoff occurs when precipitation from rain or snowmelt flows over the ground. Impervious surfaces like driveways, sidewalks and streets prevent storm water from naturally soaking into the ground.

### WHY IS STORM WATER RUNOFF A PROBLEM?

As storm water flows over driveways, sidewalks and streets, it picks up debris, chemicals, dirt and other pollutants, which it can then carry into a storm drainage system or directly to a lake, stream, river, wetland or coastal water. Anything that enters a storm drainage system could be discharged, untreated, into the water bodies we use for swimming, fishing and providing drinking water.

### WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF POLLUTION?

Polluted storm water runoff can have many adverse effects on plants, fish, animals and people.

- Sediment can cloud the water and make it difficult or impossible for aquatic plants to grow.
- Sediment can also destroy aquatic habitats.
- Excess nutrients can cause algae blooms. When algae die, they sink to the bottom and decompose in a process that removes oxygen from the water. Fish and other aquatic organisms can't exist in water with low dissolved oxygen levels.



- Bacteria and other pathogens can wash into swimming areas and create health hazards, often making beach closures necessary.
- Debris, such as plastic bags, six-pack rings, bottles and cigarette butts, washed into water bodies can choke, suffocate or disable aquatic life, including ducks, fish, turtles and birds.
- Household hazardous wastes, such as insecticides, pesticides, paint, solvents, used motor oil and other auto fluids, can poison aquatic life. People and animals can become sick from eating diseased fish and shellfish or ingesting polluted water.
- Polluted storm water often affects drinking water sources. This, in turn, can affect human health and increase water treatment costs.

## STORM WATER RUNOFF POLLUTION SOLUTIONS

### HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE

Be aware that many products commonly used around the home are toxic. While hazardous household chemicals make up only a small percentage of the residential waste stream, it is important they be disposed of properly so potential negative environmental impacts are avoided. Household chemicals poured down the drain or into a catch basin pose a serious threat of groundwater contamination.

- Properly dispose of household hazardous waste, such as insecticides, pesticides, paint, solvents, used motor oil and other auto fluids, through the Town's S.T.O.P. (Stop Throwing Out Pollutants) program. The Town sponsors eight S.T.O.P. collection days each year between April and November at various locations throughout the Town. For further information on the program, and a list of collection days and locations, call 677-5748 or visit the Town's Web site, [www.oysterbaytown.com](http://www.oysterbaytown.com).
- Use low-phosphate or phosphate-free detergents.
- Use water-based products whenever possible.
- **DO NOT** pour household hazardous wastes into sinks, toilets, the ground or storm drains.



### ELECTRONIC WASTE (E-Waste)

Every day, hundreds of computers, cell phones, pagers and other types of electronic, or e-waste, as they are called, become obsolete. Once just a small segment of the total waste stream, e-waste has assumed major proportions. Not only do e-waste items have a low level of biodegradability, they contain materials that are highly toxic when released into the environment. The Town sponsors eight e-waste disposal days each year, offering residents a convenient and environmentally responsible way to recycle their e-waste. For further information on the program, and a list of collection days and locations, call 677-5848, or visit the Town's Web site, [www.oysterbaytown.com](http://www.oysterbaytown.com).

### LAWN AND GARDEN CARE

Excess fertilizers and pesticides applied to lawns and gardens wash off and cause pollution to local waters. In addition, yard waste clippings and leaves can wash into storm drains and contribute harmful nutrients and organic matter to local waters.



- Use pesticides and fertilizers sparingly. When their use is necessary, apply these chemicals with recommended amounts. Use organic mulch or safer pest control methods whenever possible. Learn about integrated pest management (IPM).
- Avoid application if the forecast calls for rain.
- When your lawn needs watering, use slow-watering devices such as trickle irrigation or soaker hoses, which reduce runoff and are 20 percent more effective than sprinklers.
- Water your lawn and garden during the cooler times of the day and don't let water run off into the storm drain. Local law permits watering before 10:00 a.m. and after 4:00 p.m. It also designates that people who live in odd-numbered houses may water their lawns only on odd-numbered days while those living in even-numbered houses may water only on even-numbered days. (If you live in an incorporated village, lawn watering regulations may vary. Please check with your local authority for information.)
- Sweep up and bag yard debris rather than hosing down areas. Compost or mulch yard waste, when possible. Don't leave it in the street or sweep it into storm drains.

### RESIDENTIAL LANDSCAPING

Attractive landscaping adds to the value of any home. To have the lovely yard you've always dreamed of and still be storm water runoff-friendly, consider the following:



- Reduce the amount of paved area on your property. Planted areas increase filtration and decrease runoff.
- Traditional concrete and asphalt don't allow water to soak into the ground. Instead, these surfaces rely on storm drains to divert unwanted water. Permeable pavement systems allow rain and snowmelt to soak through, decreasing storm water runoff.
- Install wood decking, bricks or interlocking stones instead of impervious concrete walkways.
- Select native plants and grasses that are drought- and pesticide-resistant. Native plants and grasses also require less water.
- Cultivate plants that discourage pests. Minimize grass areas, which require high maintenance.
- Specially designed areas, such as rain gardens and grassy areas planted with native plants, provide natural places for rainwater to collect and soak into the ground. Rain from rooftops or paved surfaces can be diverted into these areas rather than into storm drains.

- Vegetated filter strips, which are areas of native grass or plants created along roadways or streams, trap the pollutants storm water picks up as it flows across driveways and streets.
- Cover piles of dirt or mulch being used in landscaping projects to prevent these pollutants from blowing or washing off your yard.

### PET WASTE

Pet waste can be a major source of bacteria and excess harmful nutrients in local waters. Leaving pet waste on the ground increases public health risks by allowing harmful bacteria and nutrients to wash into the storm drain and, eventually, into local water bodies.

- When walking your pet, remember to pick up waste and dispose of it properly. Section 103-5 of the Town of Oyster Bay Code, nicknamed the "Pooper Scooper Law," requires residents to clean up after their dogs if they curb them or use any land other than their own without the express permission of the landowner.
- Flushing pet waste down the toilet is the best disposal method.



*If your dog can't do this, then you must do it.*

### GEESE AND WATERFOWL

Droppings from geese and other waterfowl can be a significant source of bacteria and nutrients that pollute our waters.

- Don't feed the geese and ducks, it encourages them to remain and become full-time residents and create a nuisance and a mess.
- Feeding them bread and popcorn is unhealthy for the birds.
- Feeding concentrates geese and leads to human/goose conflicts.



### AUTO CARE

Washing your car, degreasing auto parts and changing auto fluids, such as brake, oil and antifreeze, at home can send detergents and other contaminants through the storm drain system. Dumping automotive fluids into storm drains has the same result as dumping materials directly into a water body.

- Use a commercial car wash that treats or recycles its wastewater or wash your car on your yard, not your driveway or the road, so the water infiltrates into the ground, not the storm drainage system.



- Repair leaks and dispose of used auto fluids and batteries at a S.T.O.P. collection day. Residents may also bring used motor oil to the Town of Oyster Bay waste oil collections site at the Town Solid Waste Disposal Complex, Claremont Road, Old Bethpage; Theodore Roosevelt Marina, Bayview Avenue, Oyster Bay; and Tappen Marina, Shore Road, Glenwood Landing. Additionally, New York State law requires all service stations that perform oil changes and retailers that sell motor oil to accept up to five gallons per person per day of waste oil at no charge.

### SEPTIC SYSTEMS/CESSPOOLS

While many homes in the Town of Oyster Bay are hooked into a sanitary sewer system, others still rely on a septic system or cesspool. Leaking and poorly maintained septic systems/cesspools release harmful nutrients and pathogens (bacteria and viruses) that can be picked up by storm water and discharged into nearby water bodies. Pathogens can cause public health problems and environmental concerns.

- Have your system inspected every three years and pump your tank as necessary (every three to five years is recommended).
- Don't divert storm drains or basement pumps into septic systems/cesspools.
- Don't use septic system/cesspool additives. There is no scientific evidence that biological and chemical additives aid or accelerate decomposition in septic tanks/cesspools, and some additives may be harmful to the septic system/cesspool or contaminate ground water.
- Don't flush household chemicals or prescription drugs into the septic system.

### SWIMMING POOL AND SPA

- Drain your pool only after a test kit does not detect chlorine levels.
- Whenever possible, drain your pool or spa into the sanitary sewer system. If this is not an option, direct the water to a vegetated section of your lawn. **DO NOT** drain into the street.
- Properly store pool and spa chemicals to prevent leaks and spills, preferably in a covered area to avoid exposure to storm water runoff.

