



Stormwater Outreach for Business Owners

The Walla Walla River and its tributaries are designated as water quality limited (degraded) by the State of Washington and we need your cooperation to improve the water quality of our rivers and creeks. Some of our local creeks exceed water quality standards for fecal coliform, pesticides, temperature, and PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls). High levels of fecal coliform, which come from pet waste and failed septic systems, make fish, animals, and people sick and can make swimming unsafe. Pesticides and PCBs can be toxic to aquatic life and may cause cancer. Also, warmer water contains less oxygen that aquatic organisms need to survive.

[Chapter 13.15 of the Walla Walla Municipal Code](#) prohibits the discharge of any material other than clean, uncontaminated stormwater into the City storm drain system, underground injection control wells (i.e., drywells), and/or surface and ground waters such as Mill Creek or any of the many other creeks running through the city. Prohibited contaminants listed in the code include, but are not limited to, trash, debris, petroleum products, paints, detergents, drain cleaners, pesticides, fertilizer, chlorinated swimming pool or spa wastewater, chlorine, bromine, other disinfectants, food wastes, lawn clippings, silt, sediment, concrete, and sewage. Storm drains do NOT empty into sewer pipelines that carry wastewater from our sinks and toilets to the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Only clean stormwater may be discharged into stormwater systems, including drywells, and surface or ground waters. For swimming pools, the only exception is for discharges that have been de-chlorinated to a concentration of 0.1 parts per million (ppm) or less and are pH adjusted if necessary. However, most swimming pools and spas are normally maintained at chlorine concentrations of at least 1.0 ppm.

The following are best practices of what you can do to help prevent and reduce stormwater pollution:

Garbage/Waste Disposal

Garbage and waste material must be disposed of properly and may not be placed, washed, or allowed to flow into streets, alleys, storm drains, or creeks. Garbage cans or dumpsters located outdoors should be kept under shelter, covered to keep out rainfall, or in areas where runoff cannot flow into streets, alleys, storm drains, or creeks. Liquid residue in garbage needs to be drained as much as possible to prevent leakage. If liquid does leak out of a garbage can or dumpster, it needs to be contained and cleaned up using absorbent material. Contact the Solid Waste Division at 527-4591 to replace leaking cans and dumpsters.

Vehicle Maintenance

Maintain and fix all leaks from vehicles. Clean up all spills and leaks of fuel, oil, antifreeze, or other fluids with absorbent cloths or other absorbent material such as cat litter. Be sure to pick up and dispose of all used absorbent material properly in the garbage. Oil, fuel, and other petroleum products can suffocate fish and other aquatic organisms by coating their gills or other breathing surfaces, which prevents them from getting the oxygen they need to live. If you change your own oil or other fluids, make sure to use a drip pan and dispose of the waste fluid properly. Used motor oil and other fluids should be taken to the Household Hazardous Waste Facility at the Sudbury Landfill to be disposed of without charge.

Facility Maintenance

Wastewater from indoor cleaning operations may not be dumped or allowed to flow into the street, storm drains, or creeks. It should be disposed of in the sanitary sewer unless it contains fats, oils, or grease (FOG). FOG should be disposed of in the garbage and not down the sanitary sewer.



Grounds Maintenance

Grass clippings and other vegetative debris should not be dumped in the street or into creeks. It can block the proper drainage of stormwater in the gutter and storm drains causing ponding of water in the street which can be a traffic safety hazard. In addition, grass clippings and other vegetative debris add excessive nutrients to our creeks, which can lead to algae blooms and reduced oxygen levels in slower moving water. Unbagged leaves may be placed in piles in the street only during the leaf collection season in the fall. An open pathway along the curb should be left for stormwater to flow down the gutter to the storm drain. Other yard waste should be disposed of in your green waste recycling container, taken to the Compost Facility at the Sudbury Landfill or used to create your own compost. When mowing next to the street the discharge chute should only be directed back to the lawn. When blowing off a driveway and sidewalk, the debris should be blown back to your property or picked up and placed in bags.

Fertilizer and Pesticides

When applying fertilizer and pesticides with hand-held devices, do not let any of this material get into the street. Avoid over-fertilizing as this can leach nutrients into the groundwater. Fertilizer and grass clippings add excessive nutrients to our creeks, which can lead to algae blooms and reduced oxygen levels in slower moving water. Pesticides can be toxic to aquatic life and may cause cancer.

Dirt and Sediment

Dirt, sand, gravel, bark, or other landscaping material may not be stockpiled or stored in the street. In addition, care should be taken to prevent exposed soil, sand, gravel, and other material from eroding into the street. Sediment destroys spawning areas for steelhead, salmon and other fish by smothering eggs laid in the gravel. It also fills our storm drains causing more frequent maintenance and settles out in our creeks which reduce their ability to carry water and potentially cause flooding and increased bank erosion.

Gutter and Storm Drain Maintenance

The city is responsible for maintenance of the stormwater system including storm drains. During a storm event, a substantial amount of debris is carried into the streets and down the gutters to storm drains. Often this debris covers the drain grate causing ponding of water which can be a traffic safety hazard. You can help by keeping the streets and gutters clear of debris and unplugging storm drain grates. Keeping the lower branches of trees planted near the street trimmed back helps the street sweeper get in close to clean up debris along the curb.

Your cooperation in this matter is greatly appreciated. Please be advised that violations of the above-referenced municipal code could result in fines, penalties, or other remedies as allowable by law.

Remember...only rain down the drain. Keep our rivers and creeks healthy!

Questions and/or Comments?

Contact the City of Walla Walla Stormwater Coordinator at 509.527.4537