

### **What is Stormwater?**

Stormwater runoff occurs when precipitation from rain flows over the ground. Impervious surfaces like driveways, sidewalks, and streets prevent stormwater from naturally soaking into the ground.

### **Why is there a concern about Stormwater quality?**

Stormwater can pick up debris, chemicals, dirt and other pollutants and flow into a storm sewer system that discharges to local waterbodies. The City is mandated to annually report to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection on Stormwater protection, treatment, and water quality.

### **What does lawn care and pet waste have to do with Stormwater pollution?**

Excess fertilizers and pesticides applied to lawns and gardens wash off, are carried through the storm sewer system, and pollute the waterbodies. Yard clippings (grass, brush, etc.) and leaves can wash into storm drains and can choke, suffocate, or disable aquatic life. Be sure to cover piles of dirt or mulch being used in landscaping projects. Do not over fertilize or use pesticides during a forecasted rain event. Leaving pet waste on the ground increase public health risks by allowing harmful bacteria and nutrients to wash into the storm drain and eventually into local waterbodies. Pinellas County does have a Fertilizer Ordinance that bans the sale and use of certain fertilizers from June 1<sup>st</sup> – September 30<sup>th</sup>.

### **I am a commercial property owner and only have concrete sidewalks and an asphalt parking lot; do any of the Stormwater issues really affect me?**

Dirt, oil, and debris that collect in parking lots and paved areas can be washed into the storm sewer system and enter local waterbodies. Sweep up litter and debris from sidewalks, driveways and parking lots, especially around storm drains. Cover grease storage and dumpsters and keep them clean to avoid leaks. Do not wash off floors or decks, kitchen equipment, or dump mop buckets or other chemicals onto paved surfaces as this contaminates water is washed into the storm sewer system and enters local waterbodies.

### **How can washing my car affect Stormwater runoff?**

Washing your car on an impervious surface (i.e. concrete and asphalt) can send detergents and other contaminants through the storm sewer system. Use a commercial car wash as their water is drained to a waste water treatment facility, or wash your car on your yard so the water infiltrates into the ground.

### **Why can't I drain my pool into the street?**

The chemicals in chlorinated and saltwater pools can kill fish and pollute the water. Drain treated pool water onto a grassy or planted area where the water can be absorbed by the soil and dechlorinate the water. Any pool care company can test and neutralize the pool water.

### **What is an illicit discharge and what are the consequences?**

An illicit discharge is the discharge of pollutants or non-storm water materials into a storm sewer system via overland flow, direct dumping, or illicit connections. This means that pollutants of any kind, including leaves, grass clippings, tree trimmings and other yard waste may not be blown or swept to the street, gutter or storm drain. There are exceptions, such as water used for firefighting. City of Safety Harbor Code of Ordinances, **Chapter 24, Article VII, Section 24.69, 24.70 & 24.72 and Chapter I, Section 1.12** provides for definitions of illicit discharge and states fines may be incurred up to \$500 per day. The City also falls under Pinellas County Stormwater Regulation. Pinellas County's Stormwater ordinance, **Article VI, Chapter 58**, is intended to protect water quality and natural habitats. Under the County's ordinance, violators may be fined up to \$10,000 per day, and payment for cleanup costs may be required.

### **Who can I call to report an illicit discharge?**

Contact City of Safety Harbor Code Enforcement at **727.724.1555**. You may also call Pinellas County's Watershed Management automated stormwater watch line at **727.464.5060**.

### **Where can I find more information?**

Information can be found at the following websites:

[City of Safety Harbor - Stormwater Information](#)

[Pinellas County - Watershed](#)

[Pinellas County - Fertilizer FAQs](#)

[FDEP - Stormwater](#)

[EPA - NPDES Information](#)

[Tampa Bay Estuary](#)

[SWFWMD](#)

[Florida Friendly Landscaping](#)

[Bay Soundings](#)

Always Remember..... **When it Rains, It Drains.**