



Storm Water Management How Can Residents Help?

Tips for Residents

Discharges from individual residences within Santa Maria may contribute to water pollution. Residents can help by following these Good Housekeeping best management practices (BMPs), making Santa Maria and surrounding communities a much cleaner place to live and work. Click the image at right to download a PDF factsheet. (Page 1 is in English. Page 2 is in Spanish.)



Lawn and Garden

- Don't overwater your lawn. Water during the cool times of the day and don't let excess water run off into a storm drain.
- Apply lawn and garden chemicals sparingly and according to directions. Avoid using chemicals before it rains to prevent them from being washed into the storm drain system.
- Reduce the use of fertilizers. Try making your own compost or using slow release organic fertilizers instead.
- Cover piles of dirt and mulch to prevent these pollutants from blowing or washing off your yard into a water body.
- Select native plants and grasses that are drought and pest resistant. Native plants require less water and fertilizer.
- Direct downspouts away from paved surfaces and onto lawns and other vegetated areas to increase infiltration and reduce polluted runoff.
- Control soil erosion on your property by planting ground cover and stabilizing erosion-prone areas.
- Eliminate toxic pesticides or use less toxic alternatives for a healthy home and garden. See the [Our Water Our World Program](#) website for more information.

Vehicle and Garage

- Properly dispose of hazardous materials such as paints and paint thinners, pesticides, used oil and anti freeze, fuel additives, starter fluids, and solvents at the Santa Maria Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility located at the Santa Maria Regional Landfill, 2065 East Main Street.
- Regularly maintain your car, boat, motorcycle, and other machinery and equipment to prevent fluid leaks.
- Sweep up spilled brake fluid, oil, grease, antifreeze, and other fluids with and absorbent material like kitty liter or sand. Do not hose them into the street where they can eventually reach local streams and lakes.
- Wash your car at a commercial/coin-operated car wash that recycles wash water or wash your car on your lawn or other unpaved surface to minimize the amount of dirty, soapy water flowing into the storm drain.

If washing your car at home:

- Use a bucket and biodegradable soap
- Use as little soap and water as possible
- Look for products that don't contain nonylphenol surfactants, which act as endocrine disrupters and change the sex of fish, and phosphates, which contribute to algal blooms and low oxygen levels in waterways
- Use a trigger spray nozzle to control water flow from the hose and reduce water use
- Wash the car on a grassy area or other porous surface where soil microbes and vegetation can filter and break down pollutants and keep wash water out of the street and storm drains
- Direct wash water into a landscaped area or vacuum it up with a shopvac rather than allowing it to run into the street
- When you are done, dump your bucket of soapy water into a sink, drain, or toilet that goes to the City's wastewater treatment plant



Home Repair and Improvement

- Before beginning an outdoor project, be aware of the nearest storm drains and protect them from loose debris and other material.
- Sweep-up and properly dispose of construction debris such as concrete and mortar.
- Use hazardous substances like paints, solvents, and cleaners in the smallest amounts possible and follow manufacturer directions. Clean up spills immediately and dispose of the waste safely.
- Store substances properly to avoid leaks and spills.
- Purchase and use nontoxic, 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 for free at the Santa Maria Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility located at the Santa Maria Regional Landfill, 2065 East Main Street.

