

Urban BMPs

Water Quality Education

Best Management Practices (BMPs) are management measures used in urban areas to prevent water pollution caused by nutrients, animal wastes, toxics and sediment.

BMPs are an effective, preferred and practical approach to managing nonpoint source pollutants. BMPs are designed to reduce the quantities of pollutants that are washed into groundwater and surface waters, such as lakes, creeks, streams, rivers and estuaries by rain.

Residential BMPs are good to keep in mind during your day-to-day activities. Some solutions to pollution at residences are:

- **Use fertilizer and pesticides sparingly.** Excess fertilizers and pesticides applied to lawns and gardens wash off and pollute streams.
- **Bag yard clippings.** Yard clippings and leaves can wash into storm drains and contribute nutrients and organic matter to streams.
- **Use proper lawn irrigation.** Do not over water your lawn.
- **Inspect your septic system every 3 years and pump your tank as necessary.** Do NOT dispose of household hazardous waste in sinks or toilets. Leaking and poorly maintained septic systems release nutrients and pathogens (bacteria and viruses) that can be picked up by stormwater and discharged into nearby water bodies. Pathogens can cause public health problems and environmental concerns.
- **Use a commercial carwash that treats or recycles its wastewater or wash your car on your yard so that the water infiltrates the ground.** Washing your car and degreasing auto parts at home can send detergents and other contaminants through the storm sewer system.
- **Repair leaks and dispose of used auto fluids and batteries at designated drop-off or recycling locations.** Dumping automotive fluids into storm drains has the same result as dumping the materials directly into a water body.
- **Pick up pet waste and dispose of it properly.** Pet waste can be a major source of bacteria and excess nutrients in local waters. Flushing pet waste is the best disposal method.
- **Properly dispose of chemicals.** Do not use sinks and commodes to dispose of unwanted chemicals.

BMPs are in place for most commercial facilities and businesses. Commercial facilities have BMPs to control dirt, debris and oil that collect in parking lots and paved areas. Construction areas use BMPs to control erosion and sediment and to limit the amount of water flowing off the site or to change the direction it travels. Automotive businesses also use BMPs to avoid oil and gas spills or to clean spills properly.

Whenever possible implement these practices in your day-to-day activities to reduce pollutants that could enter water bodies near you.

Remember: what you do affects the quality and quantity of the water you drink and use. By using these practices to reduce pollutants from entering your water resources, you are helping protect water now and in the future. Help save Texas water and make every drop count.

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