

# City of River Rouge

MICHIGAN

10600 WEST JEFFERSON AVENUE  
RIVER ROUGE, MICHIGAN 48218-1242

Dear Resident:

The City of River Rouge Water Department has been evaluating the City's storm sewer system in your neighborhood. The purpose of the evaluation was to identify and physically mark the storm sewer inlets that discharge area storm water directly to the Detroit River without any type of treatment prior to discharge. The storm sewer inlets identified have been painted yellow. Storm water entering these catch basins can easily carry contaminants such as oil, chemicals, fertilizers, pet waste, leaves, trash, and sediment to the Detroit River. As such, it is important for all City residents and visitors to be aware of what goes into the storm drains and to do their part in protecting the environment and the Detroit River. Only rainwater or melted snow are allowed into the storm drains.

Enclosed, you will find information from the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) regarding steps that can be taken to help keep our storm water clean. You will also find information on [mionewater.org](http://mionewater.org) as well as on the City's website and social media postings.

The City Department of Public Works provides yard waste pickup on Fridays, which includes grass clippings, leaves, brush, spent garden plants, twigs, vines, weeds, and tree trimmings (no longer than 4 feet and less than 2 inches in diameter). Logs, stumps, dirt, rocks, and pet waste are not accepted. Yard waste must be bundled or placed into acceptable yard waste bags for pickup.

It is important to clean up after your pet to prevent bacteria like E. coli from entering the Detroit River via the separate storm sewer system. Pet waste should be bagged immediately and disposed of in a trash receptacle.

Use fertilizers sparingly, if at all, and opt for slow-release or organic fertilizers, which release nutrients gradually. Do not apply fertilizer when rain is in the forecast. Keep fertilizer on the lawn and do not wash it into storm drains. Sweep fertilizer spilled on sidewalks and driveways back into the lawn.

Wash cars on the lawn, gravel, or at a car wash instead of on pavement. Use phosphate-free, biodegradable soap. If washing cars on pavement, or power washing your home or pavement, use a towel to block and redirect the water to a lawn or landscaped area. Pour buckets into a sink, toilet, or grass-covered area and not into storm drains.

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Properly dispose of oil, household cleaners, gasoline, pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, and other chemicals. Wayne County offers a hazardous waste collection program designed to accept unwanted household chemicals and electronics for recycling from Wayne County residents. Further information can be found at the Wayne County Website and the link below.

<https://www.waynecountymi.gov/Government/Departments/Environmental-Services/Land-Resource-Management/Materials-Management-Planning/Household-Hazardous-Waste-Program>

Local auto parts stores such as Advance Auto Parts in Lincoln Park offer automotive battery, motor, and gear oil recycling to their customers. Never pour oil or chemicals down the storm or sanitary drains.

Recreational vehicle tanks should be emptied at licensed dump sites and never down the storm sewer. RV dumpsites can be located at the RVdumpsites.net website (see link below), including a free RV dump station located at the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department.

<https://rvdumpsites.net/?%2BMichigan#!River+Rouge,+Michigan,+United+States>

An illicit discharge is any discharge containing a polluting material, such as spills, oil, bacteria, sewage, suspicious dumping, detergents, sediment from construction sites, polluted runoff from storage piles or dumpsters, or other non-storm water materials discharged to the storm sewer drains. If you observe an illicit discharge or pollution incident, you can report it to the City of River Rouge Water Department at (313) 842-4803, the City of River Rouge Department of Public Works at (313) 842-6482, the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) Pollution Emergency Alert System (PEAS) at (800) 292-4706, or the Wayne County 24-Hour Pollution Hotline at (888) 223-2363.

Please feel free to contact the Water Department at (313) 842-4803 with any questions or concerns. The City's complete Storm Water Management Program has been posted on the City's website for review and public comments are welcomed and can be made by contacting the Water Department.

# Seven Simple Steps to Clean Water

## 1. Help keep pollution out of storm drains

Storm drains lead to our lakes and streams. So, any oil, pet waste, leaves, or dirty water from washing your car that enters a storm drain gets into our lakes and streams. With almost 5 million people living in Southeast Michigan, we all need to be aware of what goes in our storm drains. **Remember, only rain in the drain!**

## 2. Fertilize sparingly and carefully

Storm drains in our streets and yards empty into our lakes and streams. So, when we fertilize our lawn we could also be fertilizing our lakes and streams. While fertilizer is good for our lawn, it's bad for our water. Fertilizer in our lakes and streams causes algae to grow. Algae can form large blooms and use oxygen that fish need to survive. With 1.5 million homes in Southeast Michigan, all of us need to be aware of the cumulative effects of our lawn care practices.

What can you do? Simple. **Use fertilizer low in phosphorus**, select a slow-release fertilizer where at least half of the nitrogen is "water insoluble" (check the ingredients on the label), keep fertilizer away from lakes, streams, and storm drains, and **sweep excess fertilizer** back onto your lawn.

## 3. Carefully store and dispose of household cleaners, chemicals, and oil

Antifreeze, household cleaners, gasoline, pesticides, oil paints, solvents, and motor oil are just some of the common household products that enter our storm drains. You can help keep these out of our lakes and streams . . . instead of putting these items in the trash, down the storm drain, or on the ground, **take them to a local hazardous waste center or collection day.**

## 4. Clean up after your pet

Most of us pick up after our pets to be a good neighbor and keep our yard clean. But there's another important reason. Pet waste contains bacteria that are harmful to us and our water. Leaving it on the sidewalk or lawn means harmful bacteria will be transported into the storm drains and then into our lakes and streams. So what can you do to help? Simple. Whether on a walk or in your yard, **dispose of your pet's waste promptly in the toilet or trash.**

## 5. Practice good car care

Did you know that just four quarts of oil from your car's engine can form an eight-acre oil slick if spilled or dumped down a storm drain? There are over 4 million cars in Southeast Michigan, so even small leaks matter. **Keep your car tuned and fix leaks promptly.** Not only will this make your car run better and last longer, it will be good for our lakes, streams, and air. When washing your car, keep the polluted water from going into the street and storm drain. **Consider taking your car to the car wash or washing your car on the grass.** Your lawn will gladly soak up the excess water.

## 6. Choose earth-friendly landscaping

When landscaping your yard you can protect your kids, pets, and the environment from harm. **Use pesticides sparingly.** Put mulch around trees and plants. Water your lawn only when it needs it (1-2 times a week is usually sufficient) and **choose plants native to Michigan.** Once established, these plants tolerate dry weather and resist disease.

## 7. Save water

Did you know that individually we use about 77 gallons of water each day? When we overwater our lawns, it can easily carry pollution to the storm drains and to our lakes and streams. **Consider using a broom instead of a hose** to clean sidewalks and driveways. Direct hoses and sprinklers on the lawn, not the driveway. Water when necessary instead of on a fixed schedule. Remember, saving water also saves you money.

We might not be able to see the lake or stream from our window, but it's there. It might be a small stream or ditch or even the storm drain in the street. All of these lead to our lakes and streams. So, what we do at home affects our rivers and lakes!



The Southeast Michigan Partners for Clean Water formed to engage the public in activities that protect our water resources through continued awareness, knowledge, and action. The partnership includes representatives from SEMCOG, various counties, communities, watershed councils, and water-quality professionals in Southeast Michigan.

Our Water. Our Future.



Find out more at [www.semco.org](http://www.semco.org)

## Seven Simple Steps to Clean Water

1. Help keep pollution out of storm drains

2. Fertilize sparingly and carefully

3. Carefully store and dispose of household cleaners, chemicals, and oil

4. Clean up after your pet

5. Practice good car care

6. Choose earth friendly landscaping

7. Save water



# STORMWATER

Keep it Fresh.

Stormwater is rainwater or melted snow that flows off ground surfaces into ditches or underground pipe systems, where it makes its way into local waterways. Water is our most precious natural resource. **Allow only rain down the storm drain.**

KEEP THESE ITEMS OUT OF THE DRAIN:



**MiOneWater.org**



**Allow Only Rain Down the Drain**

# TIPS

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Pick up pet waste and dispose of it in the trash.

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Never fertilize your lawn before a storm! Reduce the amount of chemicals you apply to your lawn.

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If you can, implement a rain garden at your house. Green infrastructure tools like these help water absorb into the ground, preventing water and pollutant runoff.

**SEMCOG**



**GLWA**  
Great Lakes Water Authority

# IMPORTANT NUMBERS

EMERGENCIES		
Police/fire	911	24-hour
MDEQ Pollution Alert Systems (PEAS)	800-292-4706	24-hour
NON-EMERGENCIES		
Livingston County Health Department Drain Office	517-546-9858 517-546-0040	8 a.m.-5 p.m.
Macomb County	877-679-4337	24-hour
Monroe County Drain Commissioner	734-240-3115	24-hour
Oakland County	248-858-0931	24-hour
St. Clair County	877-504-SWIM	24-hour
Washtenaw County	734-222-3800	8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.
Wayne County	888-223-2363	24-hour
Local IDEP Coordinator:		
Local Soil Erosion Control Agency:		

Developed by the Southeast Michigan Regional IDEP Work Group

Available for download at:

<http://www.allianceofroutecommunities.com/PDFs/technical/IDEP%20Tip%20Card2.pdf>

# HOW TO SPOT ILLICIT DISCHARGES A Tip Card for Municipal Staff



An illicit discharge is any discharge containing polluting material, such as sediment, nutrients, oil and bacteria. These discharges can drain to lakes and streams via storm drains. The communities in Southeast Michigan are required to prevent illicit discharges from entering storm water. You can do your part by notifying the appropriate agency when you spot a potential illicit discharge.

## WHAT SHOULD YOU REPORT?

- Spills and contamination to lakes, rivers and streams
- Suspicious dumping to catch basins or waterways
- Unusual discharges from pipes
- Sewage on the ground or draining to surface water
- Large number of dead fish in waterways
- Failing or leaky septic systems
- Polluted runoff from storage piles or dumpsters to catch basins or waterways
- Sewage, detergent, chemical, petroleum or rotten egg odors
- Soil erosion from construction sites

# WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF AN ILLICIT DISCHARGE?

## SANITARY SEWER DISCHARGE

### Signs:

- Sanitary debris
- Staining on pipe
- Soap suds
- Gray or discolored water
- Smells like sewage, rotten eggs or detergents

### Contact:

IDEP coordinator and/or DPW



Soap suds



Gray staining



Broken sanitary sewer

## ILLEGAL DUMPING, SPILLS OR FLOOR DRAIN CONNECTIONS

### Signs:

- Oil sheen
- Stained sediment, rocks or vegetation
- Smells like petroleum or chemicals

### Contact:

IDEP coordinator or MDEQ



Oil sheen

## INDUSTRIAL DISCHARGES

### Signs:

- Discolored water or vegetation
- Smells like petroleum or chemicals

### Contact:

IDEP coordinator and/or DPW



White foam

## FAILED SEPTIC SYSTEMS

### Signs:

- Overgrown or wet patch of grass
- Cheater pipe to ditch
- Soap suds
- Gray or discolored water
- Smells like sewage, rotten eggs or detergents

### Contact:

Health Department and/or IDEP coordinator



Overgrown septic field



Cheater pipe from septic field

## AGRICULTURAL RUNOFF, FERTILIZERS OR SANITARY SEWER WASTE

### Signs:

- Algae growth near drain outlet or in a ditch

### Contact:

IDEP coordinator, DPW and/or Drain Office



Excessive algae

## SOIL EROSION FROM CONSTRUCTION SITES

### Signs:

- Bare soils or banks with no soil erosion control fencing
- Muddy discharge from an outfall

### Contact:

Local soil erosion control agency (local community or county)



Soil erosion

Wayne County Department of Public Services Presents:

# Household Hazardous Waste Collection Voucher

**Step 1:** Wayne County residents can obtain one voucher per household by; visiting 3600 Commerce Court Building E Wayne, MI 48184 M-F 8 am to 4 pm., contacting the Environmental Services Division of Wayne County at 734-326-5708 or ESGHelp@waynecounty.com, or your local municipal public works department.

**There is a limited supply of vouchers, which will be issued on a first-come, first-served basis.**

**Step 2:** Next take your County issued voucher, along with acceptable items, to ERG Environmental Services.

## Drop Off Days & Times

M-F 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

## Drop Off Location

ERG Environmental Services  
13040 Merriman Road  
Livonia, MI 48150



## Examples of Acceptable Items



- Household paints, stains, dyes
- Floor wax, floor care products, carpet cleaner
- Furniture polish, bathroom cleaners, stain removers, solvents
- Non-controlled pharmaceutical waste
- Nail polish, glue
- Fertilizer, lawn and garden chemicals, pesticides
- Antifreeze, motor oil, gasoline
- Automotive batteries and dry cell batteries, fluorescent bulbs (all types)
- Fire extinguishers, smoke detectors
- Mercury thermometers, thermostats, elemental mercury and electronics recycling
- Computer CPU's, monitors, printers, scanners, keyboards, mice
- Cell phones, fax machines, copiers and televisions



**Public Services**

## Questions?

Contact John Demerjian at  
(734)-326-5708 or

[jdemerjian@waynecounty.com](mailto:jdemerjian@waynecounty.com)