

STORMWATER & STORM DRAINS – WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

When storm drains (also known as catch basins) get clogged with fallen leaves and debris, water can no longer be drained from the street [during a heavy rain](#). Water pools along the street and can flood intersections and homes. PWSA monitors and cleans catch basins to prevent street flooding, property damage, and hazards to pedestrian and street traffic. Here are some tips for how to prevent clogged storm drains.

Dispose of Debris Responsibly

Materials dumped into catch basins flow directly into streams and rivers. The following are ways you can avoid waste entering storm drains that lead to local waterways

- **Don't blow lawn clippings into the street.** When cleaning up your yard, rake or blow leaves into a pile and place them in a trash bag for collection.
- **Exercise caution when working on cars or other vehicle equipment.** A single quart of motor oil can contaminate up to 2 million gallons of drinking water. Take used oil or antifreeze to a service station or recycling center. Always check your car, boat, or motorcycle for leaks.
- **Use only biodegradable soaps when washing your car.** Try to wash it on the lawn or another unpaved surface to avoid water running into nearby storm drains.
- **Don't apply pesticides, herbicides, or fertilizers to your yard before it rains.** This will not help the chemicals absorb better, but will create polluted runoff.
- **Keep as much of your property unpaved as possible.** Permeable surfaces allow stormwater to absorb instead of running off into the street.
- **Dispose of pet waste properly.** Pet waste contains harmful bacteria that can enter local waterways. Clean up your yard regularly and carry a bag when walking your pet.
- **Limit the use of sand and salt on driveways and sidewalks.** When snow melts, it carries these pollutants with it into storm drains.
- **Properly dispose of cigarette butts and other trash.** Cigarette butts are considered to be the most-littered item in the world. Smoking related debris accounts for 1/3 of all debris found on U.S. beaches, rivers, and streams. Hold on to trash and wait to throw it out in a receptacle.

Check Your Local Storm Drains Regularly

If you see debris on a storm drain, remove it. Never attempt to remove a storm drain grate, only the debris on the top of the grate.

If you see a clogged storm drain, please notify
PWSA Emergency Dispatch 24/7 at 412.255.2423 with a specific location.

You can also report clogged storm drains on Twitter @pgh2o.
Use the hashtag #drainspotting with a specific location.