

Storm Water ...what is it?

Stormwater or urban runoff is the water you often see flowing down the gutter. The water travels down the gutter and disappears. But where does it go? The water and everything else in the gutter, goes to a catch basin. From there, the water then flows into one of our many canyons or our underground storm drain system. But where does it go after that? Runoff from the northern



portion of the City flows into Machado Lake in Wilmington. The eastern portion of the City, drains through San Pedro and into Los Angeles Harbor. The rest of the city discharges runoff directly into the Pacific Ocean.

Many people wonder why storm water goes untreated. Here is why. Gutters are designed to prevent flooding. Their job is to get water off of the street as quickly as possible during a rainstorm. That is it. The storm drain system they dump into is designed to take the water off the streets and dispose of it quickly. The quickest way to get rid of millions of gallons of water is to flow it into the ocean. Immediately.

Unlike the sewer system, which carries wastewater (sewage) from indoor drains (ie. sink, toilet, and bathtub) to a wastewater treatment plant like Hyperion, the storm drain system releases storm water directly into the ocean untreated. The reason for this is simple, when it rains, wastewater treatment plants can not handle the vast amount of run-off that is created almost instantly. This means that any trash, organic materials, or hazardous chemicals that are dumped in the streets here in Rancho Palos Verdes, can pollute our ocean, close our beaches or harm aquatic life.

How does storm water become polluted?

As rain falls on city streets, it picks up more than just leaves and trash from the streets, it also picks up oil and grease that have dripped from automobiles; copper dust from brake pads; fertilizers from lawns and bacteria from dog, cat and bird waste from outdoors. Basically anything on the street or in the gutters can cause stormwater pollution.

Because runoff from storms and other sources drain directly into the ocean untreated, it is our responsibility as a storm drain operator to maintain the system.

What are we doing?

This is what the City of Rancho Palos Verdes is doing to prevent Stormwater pollution:

- Cleaning-out all City-owned storm drain catch basins at least twice per year and on a complaint basis.
- Scheduled street sweeping of all residential and commercial streets including City owned and/or operated parking lots.
- Stormwater Pollution Prevention Ordinance in place.
- Implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) on City construction and maintenance activities.
- Provides training for all relevant City employees to ensure awareness and use of BMPs on construction and maintenance projects on an on-going basis.
- Active public outreach and education program.
- In 2006 the city took video of all its storm drains to check their structural integrity and to ensure that no one has illegally connected to the storm drain system.
- Inspecting approximately 70 businesses on a regular basis.
- Requiring special treatment systems on high priority new development projects.
- Installing special filters in high priority catch basins.
- Collecting weekly samples at three of our beaches.

Here is what you can do:

As a resident or business owner in Rancho Palos Verdes you can make a difference in the community in which you live. Read on to learn what you can do to prevent stormwater pollution.



- Keep your vehicles in good running order and perform routine maintenance to prevent leaks from oil and other car fluids.
- Don't hose down oil spills into gutters or drains. Clean up with absorbent materials (such as kitty litter) to allow prompt cleanup of all spills. Dispose of absorbent materials in trash.
- Take your vehicle to a car wash instead of washing at home. If you do wash at home, divert the wash water onto your lawn or garden and use a biodegradable, phosphate-free detergent. Use a bucket (not a running hose) to wash and rinse your car to conserve water.

- The City has 2 used oil recycling centers. Please take your used oil and filters to one of these locations.

Kragen Auto Parts #1649
 29227 S Western Ave
 Rancho Palos Verdes , CA 90275
 (310) 514-0478

Valvoline Instant Oil Change
 29519 Western Ave
 Rancho Palos Verdes , CA 90275
 (310) 519-8295

- Leave your used motor oil and filters in a sealed container, or zip lock bag at curbside on your recycling day (the first collection of the week).
- Please dispose of hydraulic transmission and radiator fluids at a Household Hazardous Waste Facility. Or visit the Gaffey SAFE center located at 1400 N. Gaffey Blvd., San Pedro. It is open every Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 9 am to 3 pm.
- Don't blow or rake leaves into streets, gutters, or storm drains.
- Use organic or non-toxic fertilizers. Don't over fertilize and don't fertilize near ditches, streams, or other water bodies.
- Use non-toxic pesticide alternatives whenever possible.
- Never clean paintbrushes or rinse paint containers into a street, gutter, or storm drain.
- Pick up after your pets. All of them.
- Make sure your pool is algae free and dechlorinated before pumping to the street or canyon. Please do not drain your salt water pools to the street. Salt water negatively impacts our native flora and fauna and fresh water animals (such as frogs and tadpoles) will not survive any influx of salt water into their habitats.

Helpful Phone Numbers:

L.A. County Household Hazardous Waste Hotline	1-888-CLEAN-LA
24-Hour Illegal Dumping Hotline (to report illegal dumping)	1-888-CLEAN-LA
Los Angeles County Health Department	1-213-351-6634
Los Angeles County Health & Hazardous Materials Division	1-213-890-4089
Air Quality Management District General Information Line	1-909-396-2000
Sanitation Districts of L.A. County (HHW)	1-800- 238-0173
L.A. County Dept. of Public Works (HHW)	1-888-CLEAN-LA
Household Hazardous Waste Pickup	1-800-HHW-PKUP
Recycling Center Locations	1-800-RECYCLE

Useful links

General: www.888cleanla.com

For Residents:

General: <http://dpw.lacounty.gov/Resident/>

Recycling: <http://dpw.lacounty.gov/epd/Recycling/index.cfm>

For Businesses

General information <http://dpw.lacounty.gov/business/>

Recycling information:

<http://dpw.lacounty.gov/epd/brtap/recyclingsite/index.cfm>

For schools:

Student education: <http://dpw.lacounty.gov/epd/defenders/index.cfm>

<http://www.generationearth.com/>

Teachers: <http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/Schools/>

<http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/schools/SB373/Updates.htm>

