As employees of the County of San Diego, it is up to us to help keep our local waters healthy and to demonstrate best management practices within our communities to keep our waters clean.

Many activities we engage in as County employees and local residents could lead to illegal water pollution if not properly managed. The following information has been compiled to help you identify sources of pollutants and ways to prevent them from entering our waterways.

WATER QUALITY

Water that flows through our local storm drain system, also known as the **Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4)**, does not get treated before entering our creeks, rivers, lakes, and ocean. Because of this, the MS4 is regulated to prevent contamination. Allowing pollutants to enter the MS4 can result in enforcement or in third-party lawsuits.

POLLUTANTS

Did you know that only rain water is permitted to enter the storm drains?

That means any materials or non-storm water that enter the MS4 is **unlawful.** This includes **directly dumping or sweeping pollutants into inlets**, allowing **irrigation runoff** to enter the storm drain system, as well as **littering, failing to keep sites clean, or improperly storing materials and wastes** that can end up in the MS4 when it rains.

Pollutant	Sample Sources	Possible Outcomes
Pathogens (bacteria/viruses)	Trash; animal waste; failing sewer/septic systems; used cooking oil	Illness for people and wildlife
Sediment (dirt)	Loose or eroding soil from landscapes, construction, and unpaved areas; uncontained or uncovered stockpiles	Clogs storm drains which can lead to flooding; clouds water leading to aquatic plant and animal death and loss of habitat
Fertilizers & organic wastes	Landscape fertilizers; animal waste; sewer/septic system leaks; leaves and grass clippings	Cause algae blooms; organic materials decompose and remove oxygen creating aquatic "dead zones"
Heavy metals	Rusty or galvanized metal; metal grinding/cutting/welding; engine, brake, and tire wear dust	Poisons plants and animals and can accumulate up the food chain
Oil & grease	Cooking oil, automotive oil, diesel fuel	Prevents oxygen from getting to aquatic plants and animals, can carry heavy metals or bacteria
Chemicals & pesticides	Soaps, solvents, paints, automotive fluids, insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, rodenticides	Soaps can coat fish gills leading to suffocation; chemicals poison aquatic plants and animals and can accumulate up the food chain
Trash	Littering, unkempt/open trash cans/dumpsters	All of the above!

If you would like to know more about how pollutants impact our waterways, you can find details at **sandiegocounty.gov/stormwater**

REGULATIONS & RESPONSIBILITIES

The County must comply with the State MS4 Permit, Construction General Permit, and Industrial General Permit.

To help keep us in compliance, there are things we can do to keep pollutants out of our waterways. **Best Management Practices (BMPs)** are actions that should be taken to prevent pollution from entering storm drains.

Some examples include:

- Use dry methods such as sweeping to regularly remove dirt, leaves, oil residue, and other pollutants from outdoor areas (work areas, parking lots, storage areas, dumpster enclosures, etc.)

- Put all trash, scrap metal, green waste, and other debris in appropriate dumpsters and keep lids closed

- Cover and contain stockpiles with tarps and other controls (sand/gravel bags, straw wattles)

- Keep all liquids and other transportable materials covered and contained (indoors or within secondary containment)

REPORTING

If you see any stormwater pollutant discharges in or around County facilities or County-maintained roads, report it immediately by email, phone or web:

EMAIL: watersheds@sdcounty.ca.gov

PHONE: (888) 846-0800

WEB: projectcleanwater.org/report-pollution

For more information, go to sandiegocounty.gov/stormwater and click the Resources link to find the Guidance Handbook to Reduce Water Pollution

county of san diego