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Storm Drain Stenciling

Why stencil storm drains?

Unlike water that goes down your drain and into the sanitary sewer toward your local sewage treatment plant, water that enters storm drains remains untreated and flows directly to local water bodies. Any substances that this water carries are potential contaminants that can degrade water quality. Therefore, it's very important to prevent contaminants from entering storm drains and to never pour anything into them. Intentionally pouring pollutants into street gutters and storm drains is not only dangerous to the environment, it is illegal.

Since people often don't realize what happens to water that goes down the storm drain, people who would never dream of polluting a lake or stream might dump fertilizer, paint, used motor oil, pet waste, cigarette butts or litter down storm drains. Storm drain stenciling is a simple way to prevent this kind of pollution in your neighborhood. It lets your neighbors and visitors know that anything dumped in the street winds up in our waterways.

What is storm drain stenciling?

Storm drain stenciling is simply the act of labeling storm drain inlets with messages that remind people not to dump anything down the drain. Using a stencil, a reminder is spray painted next to the storm drain, deterring people from dumping items in it. The message usually says something like "Don't Dump, Drains to River".

Who should participate in storm drain stenciling?

Storm drain stenciling is a great activity for all types of organizations from neighborhood associations to scout groups to service clubs and environmental groups. By participating, the members of your group will become more aware of the close link between our streets and waterways and leave behind a reminder for others.

How do I get involved in storm drain stenciling?

As part of our efforts to improve public education and participation related to stormwater pollution prevention, the Broome-Tioga Stormwater Coalition can help your group organize a storm drain stenciling event in your community. We may be able to supply you with materials, can help you coordinate with your municipality, and can offer other guidance.

For more information about storm drain stenciling in Broome County, please contact the Broome County Environmental Management Council at (607)778-2116 or begin@co.broome.ny.us.

In Tioga County, please contact the Tioga County Soil & Water Conservation District at (607)687-3553 or walshw@co.tioga.ny.us.

Does storm drain stenciling have any impact?

While stenciling storm drains may seem like a small thing, it is important. Much of the pollution affecting our water resources comes from small, scattered sources. This activity helps to spread that message to everyone in the community. It's up to each of us to reduce the pollution that comes from our cars, streets, driveways and yards. If each person does their part it will add up to cleaner water for everyone.