

## Fall & Winter Stormwater Tips: Help Protect our rivers and creeks!



Benton County and Philomath, would like to remind residents that with winter weather will soon be upon us, and runoff from rain, snow and ice carries pollutants that get in our stormwater! Below are some tips to help protect the rivers and streams that carry our drinking water and provide habitat for many creatures.



Remember that what goes on the street, flows to our storm sewer, and goes directly to the river and streams.

By following these simple things in your daily routine, you will help keep our rivers and streams healthy!

### Maintaining your Vehicle

- Use ground cloths or drip pans under your vehicle if you have leaks or if you are doing engine work. Clean up spills immediately and properly dispose of clean up materials.
- Collect all used oil in containers with tight-fitting lids. Old plastic jugs are excellent for this purpose.
- Never dump motor oil, antifreeze, transmission fluid or other engine fluids into road gutters, down the storm drain or catch basin, onto the ground, or into a ditch.



### Vehicle Washing

#### Washing Your Car Properly

- The best action is to take your vehicle to a commercial car wash, especially if you plan to clean the engine or the bottom of the car. Most car washes reuse water several times before sending it for treatment at a sewage treatment plant.

If you still want to wash your car at home...

- Wash your car on gravel, grass or another permeable surface, so the ground can filter the water naturally.
- Use soap sparingly. Try to use non-phosphate detergents. Phosphates are nutrients that can cause problems for nearby waterways.
- When you're done, empty your bucket of soapy water down the sink, not the street.



## Caring for your Lawn and Garden

- Use fertilizers sparingly.
- Keep fertilizer off of paved surfaces—off of sidewalks, driveways, etc. If granular fertilizer gets onto paved surfaces, collect it for later use or sweep it onto the lawn.
- Wash your spreader equipment on a pervious (penetrable) vegetated area, like the lawn, to allow for the natural absorption of excess fertilizer.
- Never apply fertilizer to frozen ground or dormant lawns.
- Cover piles of soil with tarps to protect them from rain.



## Pet Waste

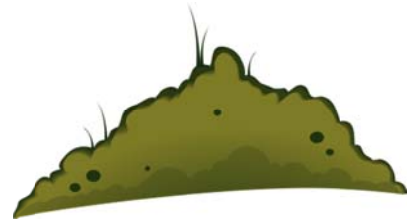
- Bag it! When going for dog walks, take a shopping bag or sandwich bag. When doggy makes a deposit, turn the baggie inside out over your hand and use it as a glove to pick up the waste.
- Flush the pet waste down the toilet because then it is treated at a sewage treatment plant.
- If flushing down the toilet is not a viable option, put the pet waste in the trash, but never put waste into storm drains.



## Moss Killer

Fighting moss is an uphill battle. Moss killers are laden with water-polluting chemicals, here are some tips and alternatives this fall/winter

- Remove moss using rakes or shovels.
- Re-seed scraped mossy areas with native or shade-tolerant grasses.
- Aerate or de-thatch your lawn to keep air moving and moisture at a minimum.
- Mow Less – Frequent mowing stresses grass, making it less able to compete with moss. Wait to mow until your lawn is 3" to 4" tall to keep it strong and healthy.
- Always be sure to apply the minimal amount of moss killers on your roof or try alternatives without zinc, iron, copper and Sulphur.



## Winter De-icing

Because all de-icers can be harmful to the environment when applied in excess, the best strategy is to reduce the use of these chemicals as much as possible.

- The first line of defense should simply be to shovel sidewalks and pathways to keep them clear and to prevent ice from forming. Also, consider that salt and de-icers are not effective when more than 3 inches of snow have accumulated.
- Apply de-icing products discriminately, focusing on high-use areas and slopes where traction is critical.
- Reduce salt and other chemicals by adding sand for traction. Store salt and other products on an impervious (impenetrable) surface. Also store products in a dry, covered area to prevent stormwater runoff.



**This information was collected and developed through a partnership between**

**Benton County Public Works & City of Philomath**

**For more information on water quality in Benton County visit or contact:**

<https://www.co.benton.or.us/cd/page/stormwater-program>

<http://www.ci.philomath.or.us/publicworks>