



B A S M A A

Alameda Countywide
Clean Water Program

Contra Costa
Clean Water Program

Fairfield-Suisun
Urban Runoff
Management Program

Marin County
Stormwater Pollution
Prevention Program

San Mateo Countywide
Stormwater Pollution
Prevention Program

Santa Clara Valley
Nonpoint Source Pollution
Control Program

Vallejo
Sanitation and Flood
Control District

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**BAY AREA AD CAMPAIGN TARGETS LOCAL RESIDENTS
TO HELP KEEP BAY AREA WATERS CLEAN**

(SAN FRANCISCO) -- The Bay Area Stormwater Management Agencies Association (BASMAA) has launched its first-ever public awareness campaign targeted at one of the most serious sources of Bay pollution -- the people that live here.

The television and radio advertising campaign, which warns about the dangers of polluted runoff, was created to let individuals know how our everyday activities can pollute Bay Area waters. According to a recent National Geographic article (Our Polluted Runoff, Feb. 1996), as much as 80 percent of water pollution comes from polluted runoff.

"People need to understand that rain and water from garden hoses and sprinklers wash materials such as motor oil, fertilizers and pesticides off of lawns, driveways and streets, and into gutters and storm drains," said Sharon Gosselin, water resources engineer scientist with the County of Alameda Public Works Agency. "From there, that contaminated water or runoff pollution flows untreated (in most of the Bay Area) into local creeks, the Delta, and Bay where it threatens the health of our environment."

Bay Area

Stormwater Management

Agencies Association

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BASMAA Campaign

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The television and radio spots, which will run for four weeks, express the significant role our Bay Area waters play for humans and wildlife. The ads suggest simple actions individuals can take to prevent water pollution and encourage residents to call toll free, 1-888-BAY WISE, to learn more about how they can do their part in being "100 percent of the solution."

Residents are urged to learn some simple ways to help prevent runoff pollution:

- Keep you cars free from leaks and dispose of used auto fluids properly.
- Never hose leaks or spills, instead use an absorbent such as sawdust, sweep it up, bag it, and put it in the trash.
- Use garden and lawn chemicals sparingly, do not overwater, and never apply them when rain is forecast.
- Remember -- storm drains are meant for clean rainwater only.

BASMAA is focused on regional challenges and opportunities to improving the quality of runoff to local creeks and the San Francisco Bay. BASMAA is a consortium of seven San Francisco Bay area municipal stormwater programs, representing 89 agencies, including 78 cities and 5 counties. In addition, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the City of San Francisco participate in several BASMAA activities.

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RUNOFF POLLUTION FACT SHEET

- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has identified urban activities as a primary source of water pollution.
- Each year more than 1.5 trillion gallons of untreated water passes through the municipal storm drain systems in the Bay Area and empty directly into local creeks, the Delta, San Francisco Bay and the Pacific Ocean. Contaminated water can cause extensive environmental damage by killing or mutating plants and animals, and poisoning wildlife habitats.
- The Municipal Storm Drain system is a system of grates, gutters, underground pipes, creeks, culverts and open channels designed to drain rain water from roads and residential areas.
- Rain or water from garden hoses and sprinklers washes materials such as motor oil, paint and pesticides off yards, driveways and streets into gutters and storm drains. From there, the contaminated runoff, or runoff pollution, flows untreated into local creeks and the Bay.
- Runoff can become polluted in two ways: *directly* (when pollutants are dumped into storm drains) and *indirectly* (when water picks up contaminants and carries them into the storm drain system). Direct contamination also includes illicit and illegal discharge of waste materials down storm drains and unlawful hook-ups where materials dumped down the sanitary drain wind up in the storm drain system.
- Contrary to popular belief, large industry and factories are no longer the primary source of runoff pollution. In urban areas, most runoff pollution originates from residential and industrial areas, new development and construction areas, roadways and parking lots.
- Common substances that contaminate runoff include antifreeze, used motor oil, paint, fertilizer, pesticides, lawn clippings, dirt and clay particles from erosion, pet droppings, chlorinated water from pools, and litter. If these materials enter the storm drain system in most of the Bay Area, they travel untreated into local creeks and San Francisco Bay, degrading water quality, wildlife habitats and recreation areas.
- Although much of the City of San Francisco has combined sewer/stormwater treatment plants which are equipped to treat human waste, they can not completely remove toxic pollutants, chemicals or oils.

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Home Maintenance

- Clean latex paints from brushes and containers into the sink, not into the gutter.
- Work mechanic's "waterless" hand cleaner into the paint brush and wash with soap and water over the sink.
- Dispose of unusable paints, thinners, thinner residue and paint strippers through your local household hazardous waste program.
- Pour off the clear thinner for reuse after the heavy particles have settled to the bottom of the cleaning container. Wrap the particles in newspaper and throw in the trash.
- Give good left-over paints to a community organization that can use it. Do not throw such excess materials into the trash or dump them down the storm drain.
- Stripping lead-based paint is dangerous and should be done by a professional. Inhaling dust or vapors can cause lead poisoning.

For more information contact Sharon Gosselin at 510/670-6547.

HELPFUL WAYS TO KEEP STORM DRAINS AND THE BAY CLEAN

Gardening

- Limit your use of insecticides, herbicides, fertilizers and other garden chemicals, and use them sparingly. Always look for less-toxic methods such as biological pesticides.
- Store chemicals in labeled, air-tight containers.
- Overwatering your lawn can waste water and cause runoff of excess insecticides, herbicides, fertilizers and other garden chemicals into storm drains.
- Water your yard early in the day to reduce evaporation.
- Instead of hosing down your sidewalk or driveway, sweep it and put the debris into the trash or compost.
- Use less pesticides by putting up traps and barriers, and by removing ivy, standing water, animal waste rotting fruit and other pest attractors.
- Control snails by collecting them in propped-up, overturned clay pots near shady sides of plants, or in shallow pans of stale beer.
- Compost all of your garden and yard debris.

Auto Maintenance

- Always recycle your used motor oil.
- If your car has one or more leaks, get them fixed.
- Never hose down oil and grease spills. Instead, to absorb grease and oil spills on concrete surfaces, sprinkle cornmeal, sawdust or kitty-litter. Allow this to sit for a few hours, then sweep it up, bag it and place in the garbage.
- Do not drain your antifreeze into the street. Instead, have it changed at a local garage that recycles or properly disposes of used antifreeze.
- Take your car to a commercial carwash. Their wastewater either goes to a wastewater treatment plant or is recycled on the premises.
- If you are washing your car at home try to wash it over grass or a gravel area where the water will be absorbed into the ground. When through, empty your bucket into a sink or toilet, not the storm drain.

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RUNOFF POLLUTION FACTS (cont'd)

- **Runoff pollution is often preventable. If individuals use common sense practices designed to prevent anything but rainwater from entering the storm drain system, they can help prevent stormwater pollution. Consider the following:**
- ◆ **Many gardeners use pesticides at 20 times the rate farmers do, yet only 10 percent of common insects are harmful.**
- ◆ **One quart of oil can contaminate up to 250,000 gallons of fresh water. Each year, Americans illegally dispose of 120 million gallons of used oil -- 11 times the amount of the Exxon Valdez spill -- on the ground, in the gutter, down storm drains and in the trash.**
- ◆ **Many people "clean up" after outdoor projects by washing excess materials and project tools off onto the driveway, into the gutter and down the storm drain.**