

should be fixed and used fluids, such as oil and antifreeze, should be properly disposed of at household hazardous waste collection events or businesses that accept them.

### **Household Hazardous Waste**

Many indoor household products are hazardous to our waterways. Cleaning, home improvement, and personal care products, as well as over the counter and prescription medications, should be properly disposed of and never put down a sink, toilet or storm drain. Many products can be disposed of at household hazardous waste collection events. Consider using non-toxic products in place of traditional products. Personal care products that contain microbeads and anti-bacterial agents have been proven harmful to the environment and should be avoided.

### *GLWA Safeguards*

The Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA) is committed to protecting against pollutants that make their way to our source water through:

- Surface Water Intake Protection Programs (SWIPPs) that protect each water intake through water quality monitoring, emergency preparedness and public education
- Active participation in the Huron to Erie water quality monitoring network

Water moves through the environment into our waterways, and is treated by our water treatment plants. Protecting the quality of this source water protects our future drinking water.

Take your responsibility seriously. Choose routine activities that limit pollutants in stormwater runoff and stay informed about water quality issues.



## **EVERYDAY ACTIONS TO PROTECT OUR DRINKING WATER**

The Detroit River and Lake Huron provide the source water that is treated to produce drinking water for more than 4 million people. Protecting this valued resource from pollutants generated by household activities is important to the region. Learn how to take proactive steps around the house to prevent contaminants from reaching our water source.



**Customer Outreach**

GLWATER.ORG

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Pollutants make their way into our rivers and lakes in a variety of ways. The most common route is through stormwater runoff. When it rains, stormwater flows over roadways and parking lots, picking up pollutants like sediment, oil and heavy metals. It also runs off lawns that can contribute pesticides, fertilizer, leaves, and bacteria from animal waste. This polluted water eventually enters a storm drain or ditch that connects directly to our waterways.

Waterways can be negatively impacted by activities nearby and in areas further away that drain to the river or lake. No matter where you live, actions can be taken to help keep pollutants out of stormwater runoff and protect our sources of drinking water.

### **Lawn Care**

Lawn care practices are a great place to start. Fertilizer, pesticides and herbicides should be used sparingly and limited to the lawn only. If any of these materials fall on driveways and sidewalks, sweep them back onto the lawn to keep them from washing into storm drains. Avoid

using a hose to clean driveways and sidewalks. Mower decks should be set to at least three inches high to limit cutting to one-third of grass length and encourage root growth. Consider having your soil tested to determine your lawn's actual nutrient needs and adjust your lawn care practices accordingly.

### **Pet Care and Septic System Maintenance**

Animal and human waste can contribute disease-carrying bacteria into our drinking water sources. Pick up pet waste promptly from your yard or during a walk and dispose of it in the trash. Homes that use septic systems should focus on proper operation and maintenance to avoid failure and costly repairs. Failing septic systems release bacteria, viruses and toxic chemicals into the ground that eventually reach our waterways.

### **Car Care**

Pollutants are also generated when we wash and service our cars. Wash your car at a commercial car wash or on the lawn to keep oils, grease, phosphates from soap, and heavy metals from washing into the storm drain. Car leaks and drips

## *Everyday Actions Matter*

- Use fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides sparingly
- Keep grass at least 3 inches high when mowing and recycle clippings back onto your lawn
- Clean up pet waste in your yard or on walks and throw it in the trash
- Wash your car at a commercial car wash and fix leaks and drips
- Properly dispose of household hazardous waste
- Use non-toxic household and personal care products
- Avoid personal care products that contain microbeads and anti-bacterial agents
- Properly operate and maintain your septic system to prevent failure
- Keep storm drains clear of debris and never dump anything into them



*Routine actions taken outside and inside your home can help keep pollutants out of our drinking water sources. Even small actions can have a big impact when multiplied by the millions of people that live in our watershed.*