

Visit the Following Web Sites for More Details on Pollution Prevention at Home:

- **Waste Management in Prince George's County**
[http://www.co.pg.md.us/Government/AgencyIndex/DER/waste.asp?nivel=foldmenu\(8\)](http://www.co.pg.md.us/Government/AgencyIndex/DER/waste.asp?nivel=foldmenu(8))
- **Household Hazardous Materials**
http://www.mde.state.md.us/assets/document/factsheets/haz_household.pdf
- **Waste Diversion in Maryland**
<http://mde.maryland.gov/programs/Land/RecyclingandoperationsProgram/Pages/Programs/LandPrograms/Recycling/index.aspx>
- **Alternatives for Household Products: Helpful Hazardous Waste Reduction Hints**
<http://extension.umd.edu/publications/PDFs/HW1.pdf>
- **Environmental Protection Agency — Wastes**
<http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/index.htm>
- **Water: Pollution Prevention & Control**
<http://water.epa.gov/polwaste/>
- **Wastes – Non-Hazardous Waste – Municipal Solid Waste**
<http://www.epa.gov/wastes/nonhaz/municipal/>
- **The Citizen's Guide to Stormwater Pollution Prevention**
<http://www.arlingtontx.gov/environmentalservices/pdf/CitizensStormwaterGuide.pdf>

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Water Pollution Line: (301) 95-CLEAN

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DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

Pollution Prevention at Home

The Best Solution to Water Pollution



RUSHERN L. BAKER, III
County Executive

Understanding How We Impact Our Environment

Make a Pledge to Reduce Your Personal Impact

The Wastewater Connection

The daily news is filled with reports of extraordinary efforts made to clean up the Chesapeake Bay and the staggering costs to restore this valuable resource. Pollution cleanup is expensive, but pollution prevention is easy, cheap and based on a simple, but powerful, idea. It makes far more sense to prevent pollutants from ever reaching our streams and rivers than it does to pay the hefty costs associated with a cleanup. As citizens of the Chesapeake Bay watershed, we can all contribute to clean water by simply changing our behavior.

Every time you flush a toilet, do the laundry, wash a paintbrush or use your garbage disposal, you contaminate water. Every drop of water that flows down the drain mingles with waste products and becomes polluted. Dirty water flows from our homes to a wastewater treatment plant; or, if you live in a rural area, a septic system, to be cleansed before being released back into the environment.

Wastewater leaving your home goes through a very complex sanitation process to remove pollutants and restore purity. As wastewater moves through a sewage treatment plant, trash, food products, human waste, soap and bacteria are removed. Treated wastewater is then discharged into a river. However, treatment plants and septic systems are not designed to remove toxic or hazardous materials such as motor oil, paint, solvents, drain cleaners and other household hazardous waste products. A simple way to protect our rivers from the harmful effects of pollution is to stop using toxic or hazardous products. Take old supplies of toxic and hazardous materials to the County's Household Hazardous Waste Acceptance Site.

The Stormwater Connection

Common activities you perform in your yard or driveway, such as fertilizing your lawn, washing your car or changing motor oil, can also carry toxic substances to a different kind of drain — the storm drain. Storm drains are located in the street and are meant to carry large volumes of stormwater through pipes that empty into our streams and rivers. However, the stormwater can also sweep up and carry the fertilizer lying on your sidewalk, detergent used to wash your car, or motor oil droplets from the pavement. The storm drain system does not clean water; it simply conveys polluted stormwater directly to our streams and rivers.

A commitment to pollution prevention pays twice. If your home is served by public drinking water provided by the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission, then it came from either the Patuxent or Potomac Rivers. Water is purified before being delivered to you and then again before being released back to the river. Sanitation is expensive and relies on complex technology, but pollution prevention is simple and cheap. We all have the ability to reduce our impact on the environment with simple behavior changes and a pollution-preventing attitude.



Pollution Prevention Quick Tips

Recognizing the Hazard

- When signal words like "Warning," "Caution," "Danger" or "Poison" appear on the label, the product is toxic or hazardous. These products can harm both you and the environment.

Go for the Green

- Make your own cleaning supplies using simple non-toxic ingredients such as baking soda, soap and vinegar.

Conserve Water

- Every drop down the drain becomes wastewater that must be cleaned. When faucets run while you brush your teeth, wash dishes or shave, you contribute to pollution. Take short showers, and run dishwashers and washing machines with a full load only.

Never Down the Drain

- Paint, landscape chemicals and hazardous hobby supplies should never be washed down the drain. Use the County's Household Hazardous Waste Acceptance Site to dispose of harmful household waste.

Follow the Label

- Always read the label, and follow all directions before you use household products. Store household products in original containers so the contents can be identified.

Practice Good Housekeeping

- Safely store products where they cannot accidentally contaminate stormwater or wastewater. Periodically identify and dispose of products that you no longer use at the County's Household Hazardous Waste Acceptance Site before the packaging deteriorates.

Spills Happen

- Be prepared for accidental spills with absorbent material for proper cleanup. Never use water to clean up spills. Water can flush harmful chemicals directly to the local stream and spread the contamination.

Practice Natural Lawn Care

- Plant native trees and ground covers in your yard. These hardy plants need minimal, if any, applications of fertilizer, pesticides or water to thrive. Before mowing, allow lawn areas to grow to 3 inches in height to naturally filter pollutants from stormwater.

Considerate Car Care

- Before changing fluids such as motor oil and antifreeze, have containers ready to store waste products. Dispose of waste properly, and remember to recycle.