

Public Education & Outreach on Stormwater Impacts

Because stormwater runoff is generated from dispersed land surfaces—pavements, yards, driveways, and roofs—efforts to control stormwater pollution must consider individual, household, and public behaviors and activities that can generate pollution from these surfaces. These common individual behaviors have the potential to generate stormwater pollution:

- littering
- disposing of trash and recyclables
- disposing of pet-waste
- applying lawn-chemicals
- washing cars,
- changing motor-oil on impervious driveways
- household behaviors like disposing leftover paint and household chemicals



It takes individual behavior change and proper practices to control such pollution. Therefore it is important to make the public sufficiently aware and concerned about the significance of their behavior for stormwater pollution, through information and education, that they change improper behaviors.

Phase II MS4s are required to educate their community on the pollution potential of common activities, and increase awareness of the direct links between land activities, rainfall-runoff, storm drains, and their local water resources. Most importantly the requirement is to give the public clear guidance on steps and specific actions that they can take to reduce their stormwater pollution-potential.

The benefits of public education efforts cannot be understated, especially on topics such as "nonpoint source" or "stormwater" pollution. A 2005 report, [Environmental Literacy in America](#) (3 pp, 2.94MB, [About PDF](#)) EXIT Disclaimer by the National Environmental Education & Training Foundation (NEETF) found that 78 percent of the American public does not understand that runoff from agricultural land, roads, and lawns, is now the most common source of water pollution; and nearly half of Americans (47 percent) believes industry still accounts for most water pollution.

Additional information on this minimum measure, including the stormwater Phase II [regulatory requirements](#) for public education and a [fact sheet on the public education minimum measure](#) (3 pp, 232K, [About PDF](#)), is also available.

Key BMPs and Resources:

MS4s developing a public education program should first create a public outreach strategy. An

excellent document to help MS4s develop this strategy is EPA's *Getting in Step: A Guide for Conducting Watershed Outreach Campaigns*. The additional BMPs in the next section below will help MS4s conduct different activities to educate the public.

- [Developing an Outreach Strategy](#) BMP Fact Sheet
- [Getting in Step: A Guide for Conducting Watershed Outreach Campaigns \[EPA 841-B-03-002\]](#) – provides many of the tools you will need to develop and implement an effective watershed outreach plan.

BMP Fact Sheets:

The fact sheets in this section describe BMPs and how to use them to help municipal stormwater programs and construction site operators comply with the stormwater Phase II requirements.

EPA has started updating these fact sheets to include new practices and technologies. Several of these updated fact sheets are now available in PDF format.

Developing Municipal Outreach Programs

[Developing an Outreach Strategy](#)

Promoting the Stormwater Message

[Classroom Education on Stormwater](#)

[Stormwater Outreach for Commercial Businesses](#)

[Tailoring Outreach Programs to Minority and Disadvantaged Communities and Children](#)

[Using the Media](#)

Stormwater Outreach Materials

[Educational Displays, Pamphlets, Booklets, and Bill Inserts](#)

[Promotional Giveaways](#)

[Stormwater Outreach Materials](#)

Education for Homeowners

[Alternatives to Toxic Substances](#)

[Chlorinated Water Discharge Options](#)

[Landscaping and Lawn Care](#)

[Pest Control](#)

[Pet Waste Management](#)

[Proper Disposal of Household Hazardous Wastes](#)

[Residential Car Washing](#)

[Trash and Debris Management](#)

[Water Conservation Practices for Homeowners](#)

Education for Businesses

[Automobile Maintenance](#)

[Pollution Prevention for Businesses](#)

[Promoting Low Impact Development](#)

EPA Internet Resources:

- [Stormwater case studies on public education](#) includes case studies of how a Phase I or Phase II community has implemented the public education requirements.
- [Stormwater Outreach Materials and Reference Documents](#) provides outreach materials that municipalities, watershed groups, state, and local governments can customize and use for their own stormwater outreach campaigns.
- [After the Storm](#) is a half-hour television special produced by EPA and The Weather Channel on how polluted runoff threatens watersheds. The video is intended for educational and communication purposes in classrooms, conferences, public meetings, public access cable stations etc.
- [Marine Debris](#) often called litter, is any man-made, solid material that enters our waterways. EPA's marine debris website and [factsheet](#) are useful resources for educating the public about impacts and ways to prevent marine debris.
- [Nonpoint Source Outreach Digital Toolbox](#) includes a catalog of over 700+ materials (TV/print/radio/give-aways/mascots/ public attitude surveys, evaluations of public response to media campaigns) that can be used in a stormwater public education campaign. (Release date: Fall 2006)

Other Internet Resources:

- [Stormwater Education Toolkit](#) EXIT Disclaimer from the University of Central Florida (Stormwater Management Academy) includes thousands of educational products organized by target audience, and type of activity that can impact stormwater pollution.
- City of Grand Rapids Environmental Protection Services Department – [Water Spots](#) EXIT Disclaimer includes over twenty different radio spots created to educate the public on different aspects of stormwater pollution prevention.
- [Santa Clara Valley Urban Runoff Pollution Prevention Program Watershed Watch Education Site](#) EXIT Disclaimer includes numerous downloadable materials and kits.

- City of San Diego's [Think Blue program](#) EXIT Disclaimer is an award-winning multi media campaign on preventing polluted runoff.
- Cooperative Extension's [National Extension Water Outreach Education](#) EXIT Disclaimer includes information on improving outreach efforts using "Best Education Practices".

Note: If you are referencing this page, please use this alias web address:

<http://www.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater/menuofbmps/publiceducation>