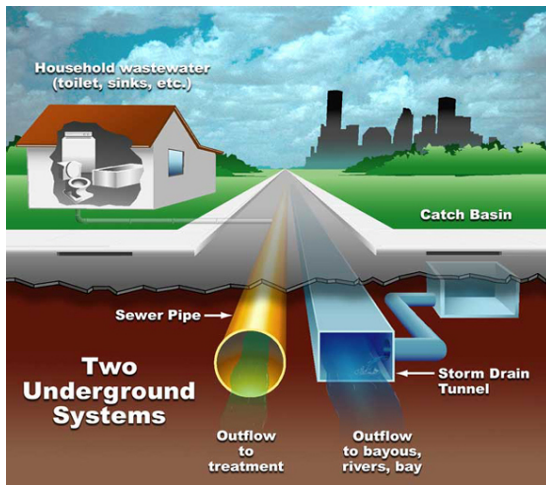


The Solution to Stormwater Pollution

It's important to understand that there are two underground systems that carry wastewater—the sanitary sewer system and the storm drain system.

First, the sanitary system handles wastewater from your home (sinks, toilets, tubs/showers, dishwashers). This wastewater is connected to a treatment plant that removes contaminants before it is released.

Second, the storm drain system is designed to carry rainwater runoff from your yard, parking lots, and streets. This runoff water drains directly to creeks, streams, bays, and bayous. **Stormwater is not treated to remove contaminants.**



The Problem

Illegal dumping in the streets and in the storm drain system is one of the largest contributors to water pollution in the country. The exposed open flood control channels and ditches are often easy targets for illegal dumping and trash disposal.

Just as a raindrop makes it way to a creek then to the bay, so does trash and anything else that has been dumped or poured.



What this means is that anything spilled, poured, and/or dumped from a yard, parking lot, or street will run off into the street and down the storm drain where it will empty into Goose Creek, Cedar Bayou, and eventually into Galveston Bay. **Remember—stormwater is not treated to remove contaminants.**



Why do we have a storm drain system?

In urban and suburban areas, buildings and pavements cover much of the land surface; this prevents rain from soaking into the ground. Most developed areas, including Baytown, rely on storm drains to carry large amounts of runoff from roofs and paved areas to nearby waterways.

Did you know that more than half of the nation's water pollution comes from storm water runoff?

The water that flows over our streets, lawns, and parking lots after a rain picks up harmful substances – like oil, detergents, paint, pesticides, bacteria, dirt, and trash. When it rains, it drains these pollutants, which are washed into the storm drains and then into our creeks, streams, bays, and bayous. **To make matters worse, some of us deliberately dump hazardous materials, trash, and yard waste directly into our storm drains.**



Small amounts of contaminants from all over the land add up to cause pollution in our storm water. **You will make a difference**, no matter how small, if you change the way you do some things.

What can you do to prevent stormwater pollution?

- **DO NOT LITTER**—place trash in a garbage can.
- **Recycle used oil and antifreeze.**
- **Properly dispose of household hazardous waste.**
- **Clean up spilled fluids with an absorbent material (kitty litter or sand) that can be thrown away instead of rinsing it into the street to the storm drain.**
- **Select pest resistant, native plants and grasses. They require less water and fertilizer.**
- **Don't apply pesticides, fertilizers, or herbicides before it rains; this will cause polluted runoff.**
- **Use a mulching mower, or install a mulching blade, and leave grass clippings on the lawn.**
- **Don't dispose of grass clippings or leaves by sweeping or dumping them into the storm drain; this will cause depleted oxygen for aquatic life. Instead, try composting.**

- **Wash cars on a lawn or unpaved surface, or use a commercial car wash.**
- **Pick up after your pets. Bacteria from pet waste are a serious threat to water quality.**
- **Never dump anything down a storm drain.**

Pollutants Found in Urban Waterways and Their Sources

1. **Trash:** Littering, illegal dumping
2. **Sediment:** Construction and development
3. **Bacteria:** Sanitary sewer overflows, pet waste
4. **Oil & Grease:** Poorly maintained vehicles, improper disposal
5. **Detergents:** Residential car washing, commercial parking lot cleaning
6. **Heavy Metals:** Industry, brake linings, tires
7. **Fertilizers & Pesticides:** Residential areas, golf courses, sports fields

Keeping our creeks, streams, bays, and bayous clean and safe will be a tough challenge as our community grows. In Baytown, we're up to the task, but we can't do it without everyone's help. The choices we make today will impact future generations. As a community, we are responsible for maintaining the quality of our waterways. **You are the key to the success** of Baytown's effort to keep our waters clean and safe. Please do your part to help minimize storm water pollution. **Remember, stormwater is not treated to remove contaminants.**

You will make a difference. Be the solution to stormwater pollution!

Homeowner's Solution to Stormwater Pollution



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