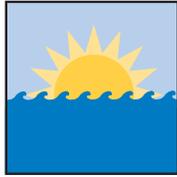


## You Can Help Prevent Runoff

While federal, state and city officials, landowners and water districts are researching and developing ways to reduce and prevent urban runoff, they can't do it alone. Some of the responsibility for keeping our beaches clean lies with you. We need you to join in the continuous and cooperative effort to protect our ocean and natural resources.



Here are some tips you can incorporate in your daily routine to prevent runoff:

- If you park your car outside, have it checked regularly for oil leaks. If your car is leaking oil, the rain will wash that oil straight into storm drains.
- Pick up pet waste and place it in the trash. When walking your pets, carry a plastic bag with you at all times for this purpose. Pet waste is one of the biggest contributors to runoff pollution.
- Reduce the amount of fertilizer and pesticides used on your landscape and don't over-water your lawn and plants. Over-watering allows these contaminants to be carried off your property and into storm drains.
- Don't dispose of motor oil, paint products, car detergents and similar pollutants down storm drains. Dispose of paints and oil products at approved disposal sites (see back panel for details). Soapy water should be poured down household drains, so it reaches sewage treatment plants.
- Use a broom or rake to clean up yard debris and dispose of it in the trash. Don't wash down your driveway and sidewalk with a hose.
- Keep your property free of litter that can potentially clog storm drains.
- Refrain from littering. When you see litter, pick it up.

## Runoff Q&A

**Q: Is there somewhere I can take my unwanted paint and used motor oil instead of dumping it in the trash or storm drains?**

A: Yes. The County of Orange manages Household Hazardous Waste Collection Centers (HHWCC), which are free drive-thru operations where hazardous waste from Orange County residents can be safely disposed. Business waste is not accepted.

The nearest HHWCC to SMWD's service area is:  
 San Juan Regional HHWCC  
 32250 La Pata Avenue  
 San Juan Capistrano

Operating hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., with the exception of rainy days and major holidays. For directions and information, call the HHWCC hotline at 714/834-6752 or visit [www.oc.ca.gov/iwmd](http://www.oc.ca.gov/iwmd). For information on recycling motor oil and oil filters, call 1-800-CLEANUP or visit [www.1800cleanup.org](http://www.1800cleanup.org).

**Q: How does washing my car at home affect urban runoff and coastal pollution?**

A: When washing your car, gallons of water are combined with soap, oil, grease, gasoline, heavy metals and other pollutants. The water and dirt from washing your car then gets deposited in storm drains and eventually empties into the ocean, which can be harmful to local habitat. Take your car to a carwash that recycles its water, to prevent runoff.

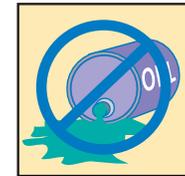
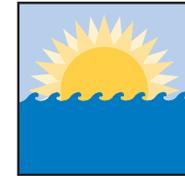


Santa Margarita Water District

26111 Antonio Pkwy., Las Flores, CA 92688  
 949.459.6400

[www.smwd.com](http://www.smwd.com)

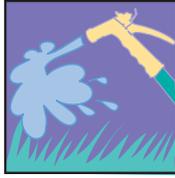
## URBAN RUNOFF



Santa Margarita  
 Water District

## What Is Urban Runoff?

Every time you water your lawn, wash your car or hose down your driveway, you're contributing to a countywide problem – urban runoff. Cities and local water districts are working hard to improve the water quality of urban runoff in an effort to reduce the pollutants in our watersheds and beaches.

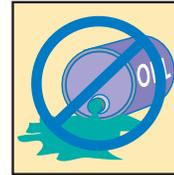


With urban development comes fertilizers and insecticides from lawns, soap from washing cars, pet waste, litter from storm drains and natural pollutants. When water from rain or a garden hose mixes with these contaminants, it flows down your storm drains, and eventually makes its way into local creeks and then into the ocean. This process affects the water quality along our shores, harms local habitat, and often results in beach closures.

## Types of Pollution

Urban runoff contains a variety of contaminants and pollutants, which affect local creeks, lakes, wetlands and beaches. In addition to harming the animal life dependent on these waters, there is evidence that runoff may cause health problems in people swimming in the ocean near creek and storm drain mouths. The most common and harmful products found in runoff include litter, pet waste, insecticides, oil, paint, antifreeze, fertilizer and grass clippings.

Read on to learn how you can prevent these contaminants from entering our storm drains and how Santa Margarita Water District (SMWD) is working to combat the problem.



## What's Being Done to Prevent Runoff?

SMWD has been paying extra attention to the increasing runoff problem in Orange County. Though Orange County's coastal water quality usually tests far above the state's water quality standards, the rapid increase in reported incidents has led many Orange County residents to believe the opposite.

Many of the beach closures are a result of new regulations which require beaches to be closed at lower thresholds.

Whenever possible, SMWD collects flows from streams, so sediment and contamination doesn't flow into critical habitat and wetland areas. Though SMWD is not the responsible agency for urban runoff, it has proposed to remove low-flow runoff from creeks to help enhance the environment. Low-flow runoff, as opposed to the runoff following heavy rains, carries higher concentrations of contaminants and its lower volume makes it easier to capture and treat.

The District is working on several water quality and runoff enhancement projects including the following:

- In Oso Creek in Mission Viejo, SMWD is developing an underdrain system to draw down water through a sand and gravel bed under the creek, which will improve water quality and reduce maintenance.
- Since runoff flows in the Cañada Gobernadora Creek have increased in the Coto de Caza community, SMWD is proposing construction of a multipurpose basin, which would provide wetlands restoration and protection, while providing a cost effective irrigation water supply.

Locally, the District is working with land developers and agencies like the Orange County Health Care Agency and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to install systems to reduce urban runoff. Among the solutions in the works are a large-scale filtration system, catch basins (concrete structures that slow the flow of water, allowing pollutants to be vacuumed out during spring and fall), lakes and ponds (which perform the same function, but create a natural environment in the process), and grassy swales (which slow the flow of water, allowing absorption of contaminants).

Together, these projects will significantly improve the quality of our local streams and beaches.

