



Colorado's Stormwater Program



What is stormwater and where does it come from?

Land development creates impervious areas such as roads, roof tops, parking areas, and sidewalks which prevent rainfall or snowmelt from soaking into the soil, thus causing stormwater runoff. This runoff can exceed the capacity of the existing natural drainage systems. As a result, natural drainages are often altered to rapidly collect runoff and convey it away (using curb and gutter, enclosed storm sewers, and lined channels). The stormwater runoff is then discharged to downstream waters such as streams, reservoirs, and lakes.

What are the responsibilities of homeowners, contractors, and developers?

What you can do to help:

Take the following steps to protect stormwater quality after development is complete:

- Clean up vehicle spills
- Pick up pet waste and put these items in the trash
- Use porous paving surfaces such as wood decking, open-celled bricks, and concrete pavers that allow water to soak into the ground
- Where possible, direct runoff from impervious surfaces to vegetated areas
- Allow thick vegetation or "buffer strips" to slow runoff and soak up pollutants
- Shovel snow onto grass/landscaped areas
- Plant drought tolerant or native species where appropriate
- Aerate your lawn
- Drain roof gutters away from the foundation onto grass or toward landscaping
- Avoid over fertilizing lawns
- Sweep up litter and debris from driveways instead of hosing debris into gutter and/or storm drain
- Call your contract waste management company or 1-800-449-7587 for disposal of household chemicals such as paint or oil

Obtain a permit:

If your project will have more than one acre of disturbed ground, you are required to obtain a Construction Activity Permit from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment:

Detailed permit information can be found on the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment Water Quality Permits webpage. Please use the following link:

cdphe.colorado.gov/water-quality-permits

During construction or remodeling:

Please take the following steps to protect storm water quality and quantity:

- Replant bare areas quickly
- Use erosion control blankets
- Cover piles of dirt
- Use silt fences to prevent sediment transport

Remember sediment is the main pollutant in our surface water. Please follow proper erosion and sediment control practices to keep soil on site.

Common Runoff Pollutants

While there are many potential pollutants that can contribute to water pollution, the most common pollutants are:

- Grass clippings and leaves
- Lawn applications (fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides)
- Pet waste
- Leaking automotive fluids such as oil, gasoline, and antifreeze
- Household products
- Soil erosion caused by bare or disturbed ground

Proper disposal of these pollutants improves water quality, promote healthy fish and plant life, and reduce public health hazards.