

### **What is a Watershed?**

A watershed is an area of land that drains to a common point, such as a creek, stream, river or lake. Every small watershed drains to a larger watershed that eventually flows to the ocean. Protecting the health of watersheds preserves and enhances the quality of life for Independence residents.

### **What is a Storm Drain?**

Storm drains are the metal grates and inlets in streets and curbs. They help prevent flooding by draining rainwater and melted snow off of streets and other paved surfaces.

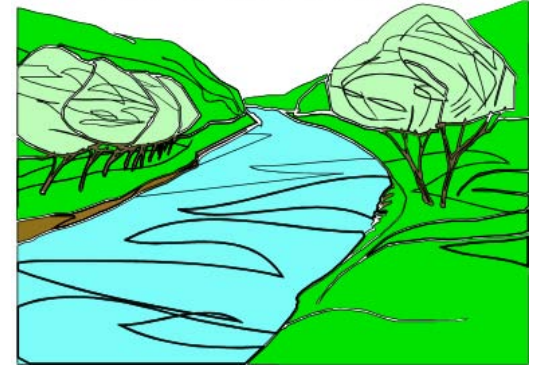
### **Is a Storm Drain System the same thing as a Sanitary Sewer System?**

Sanitary sewer systems and storm drain systems are not the same. The water that goes down a sink or toilet flows through a sewer system to a wastewater treatment plant where it is treated and cleaned. Water that flows down a driveway or street and into a gutter goes into a storm drain which goes directly to a stream or creek, *untreated*.

### **What's the problem?**

While storm drains were designed to divert water from streets, they become dangerous water polluters when harmful substances from lawns and streets flow through them. When clogged with leaves or litter, storm drains can't do their job and flooding occurs.

# **Pollution Prevention**



**You make a difference!**

### **What is Stormwater Runoff?**

Stormwater is water from rain or melting snow. It flows from rooftops, over paved streets, sidewalks and parking lots, across bare soil, and through lawns and storm drains. As it flows, runoff collects and carries soil, pet waste, salt, pesticides, fertilizer, oil and grease, litter and other pollutants. This water drains directly into nearby creeks, streams and rivers, without receiving treatment at sewage plants. Polluted stormwater contaminates local waterways. It can harm plants, fish and wildlife, while degrading the quality of water. You can make a difference by following the tips inside.



**City of Independence  
Water Pollution Control  
(816) 325-7711**

**[www.independencemo.org/wpc](http://www.independencemo.org/wpc)**

## Automotive



Use a spray gun when washing your car. Wash on a grassy or gravel area that absorbs

water or go to the car wash. Empty wash buckets into sinks, toilets or floor drains. Check for leaks and get them fixed. Never dump automotive fluids down the storm drain; recycle them. Reduce your driving where you can.

## Construction



Use water based paints. Recycle paints, stains and solvents at a household hazardous waste collection.

Maintain plant cover on your property to keep dirt from eroding and use proper erosion control measures when necessary.



Don't drain your pool into storm drains or across neighbors' property. Drain pools and spas into the sanitary sewer

through any plumbed drain in your home like a floor drain or sink.

## Septic Systems



Use water efficiently. Don't flush diapers, cat litter, cigarette butts, coffee grounds, paper towels, etc. Don't pour

chemicals down the drain. Regularly inspect your system and pump as necessary. Don't park on your drainfield or plant trees there. Never put sheds or sprinkler systems in your drainfield.



Collect grease in a can or jar and seal for disposal in trash collection. Buy products that are

reusable instead of throw-aways. Try environmentally friendly cleaners and cut back on detergents. Avoid buying products containing mercury.

## Litter



Never throw trash out on the ground. When hauling, keep loads tightly covered. Carry a litter bag in the car. Don't be a litter bug!

# Pollution Prevention

You make a difference to water quality!



Avoid buying products labeled as flammable, toxic, corrosive or reactive. Dispose of

hazardous products properly by taking them to a household hazardous waste collection.



Never rake leaves or grass clippings into the street. Compost your yard waste or have it picked up for recycling. Mulch leaves and

grass into the lawn. Landscape with native plants. Avoid over application of pesticides and fertilizers. Try organic lawn chemical alternatives. Never use lawn chemicals before a heavy rainfall is expected. Keep fertilizers and pesticides out of streets and storm drains. Properly dispose of lawn chemicals by taking to a household hazardous waste collection.



Pick up pet waste from your yard and from walks, using a plastic bag and place in the trash.