THOMPSON SCHOOL DISTRICT

Facilities Services

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Background

In 1990, the Environmental Protection Agency established the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). As a result of this, the Thompson School District is required to develop and implement a stormwater management program, including six specific elements:

- Public Education and Outreach
- Public Participation/Involvement
- Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination
- Construction Site Runoff Control
- Post-Construction Runoff Control
- Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping

What is stormwater and stormwater runoff?

Stormwater originates from any storm including rain, hail, and snow. Stormwater runoff occurs when precipitation flows over the ground. Impervious surfaces like driveways, sidewalks, parking lots, and streets prevent stormwater from naturally soaking into the ground. The stormwater flows into storm sewer inlets located on and around school property city streets.

Why should I be concerned about stormwater?

Stormwater can pick up debris, chemicals, dirt, and other pollutants on the ground and flow into a storm sewer, which then leads directly to a lake, stream, creek, river, etc. Thus, anything that enters a storm sewer system is discharged untreated into the water bodies we use for swimming, fishing, and providing drinking water.

- Dirt and sediment cloud water and make it difficult or impossible for aquatic plants to grow. Sediment can also destroy aquatic habitats.
- Excess nutrients from fertilizer can cause algal blooms. When algae die, they sink to the bottom and decompose in a process that removes oxygen from the water. Low oxygen levels make it impossible for fish and other aquatic organisms to exist.
- Debris – plastic bags, six-pack rings, bottles, and cigarette butts – washed into water bodies can choke, suffocate, or disable aquatic life like ducks, fish, and birds.
- Hazardous wastes like insecticides, pesticides, paint, solvents, and used motor oil can poison aquatic life. Land animals and people can become sick or die from eating diseased fish or ingesting polluted water.
- Many detergents contain phosphates. The chemical compounds cause an increase in plant (algae) growth in waters. This increase in growth can reduce oxygen for fish and increase pathogens in the water we drink.
- Antifreeze contains ethylene glycol. This substance can harm the kidneys in animals and humans. Just ¼ to 2 ounces of this substance can be lethal to cats and dogs.

What can I do and what does the School District do?

1. Put trash in trash cans.
2. Sweep up litter and debris from sidewalks, driveways, and parking lots.
3. Pick up pet waste.
4. Wash cars and district vehicles at a carwash with drain collection.
5. Don't allow oil, antifreeze, soaps, gasoline, or solvents to flow down storm drains.
6. Check vehicles for leaks and obtain repairs as needed.
7. Monitor construction activities to assure controls are being followed to prevent discharge to stormwater inlets.
8. Apply fertilizers and pesticides according to label instructions and prevent runoff to storm drains. Avoid over-watering after application.
9. Do not pour water from carpet cleaning, trash cans, or mop buckets onto parking lots or into storm sewers – only into approved floor drains or mop sinks.
10. Stenciling or marking of storm drains.
11. Document storm water inlet inspections on district maintenance program.
12. Dispose/recycle hazardous wastes according to local, state, and federal regulations.
13. Report and spills, dumping or suspicious substances near a culvert or storm drain immediately to the Environmental Specialist at (970) 613-5381. For after-hours concerns, call 877-560-3997.

REMEMBER – ONLY RAIN DOWN THE STORM DRAIN!