

The Illicit Discharge Connection

Did you know that it is illegal to dump anything but rain water into a stormwater drainage facility, such as a ditch, swale, catch basin or stormwater pond? That's because these pollutants can end up in water bodies or in the ground, our source of drinking water.



According to Thurston County Code (TCC 15.07), anyone who discharges pollutants into a storm drainage facility could be fined up to \$1,000 per violation if they fail to stop the discharge and clean up the pollutants. In the event of an accidental spill, or to report illegal dumping, you can:

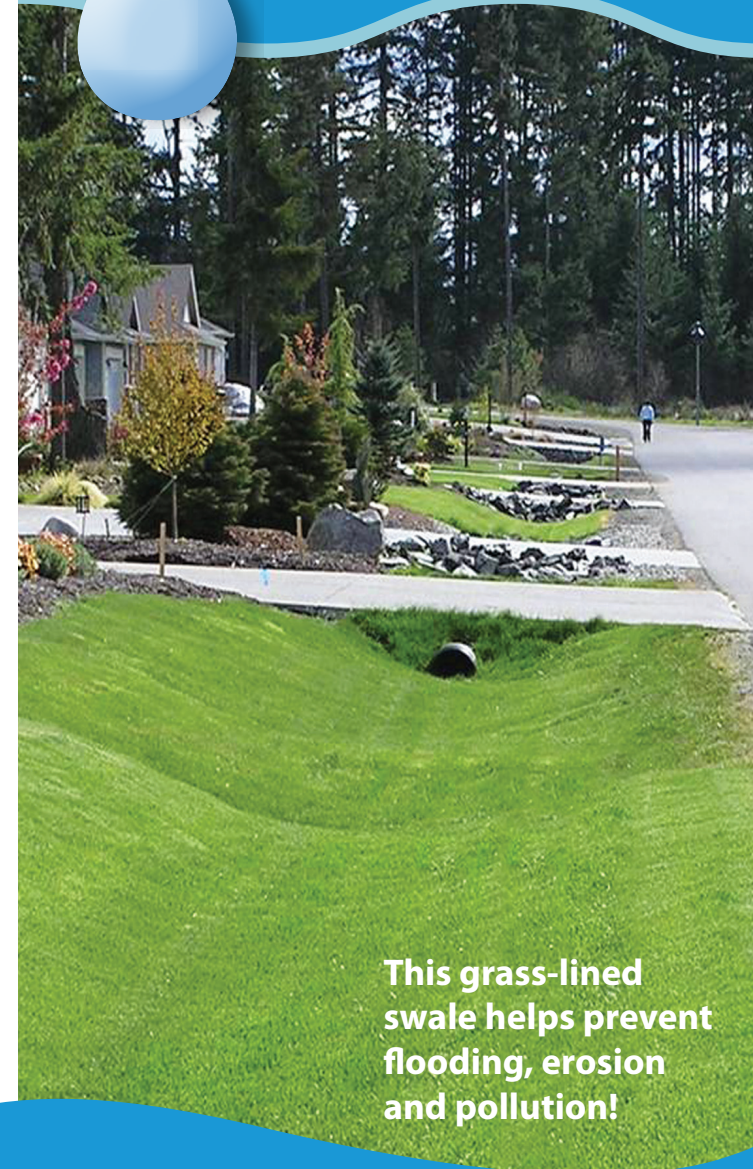
- ◆ Call the Hazardous Waste Hotline at (360) 867-2664 (Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.).
- ◆ Call the Dept. of Ecology Emergency Spill Hotline at (360) 407-6300 (large-scale spills).
- ◆ File a report online at www.co.thurston.wa.us/stormwater (click the "Report Spills/Dumping" link near the top of the page).

Thurston County adopted and enforces this code not only to protect water resources, but to comply with a stormwater permit that is issued to the county under the Federal Clean Water Act. The permit requires the county to establish rules and regulations to prevent the discharge of pollutants into storm drainage facilities. The permit is commonly known as "NPDES Phase II." (NPDES stands for "National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System.")

Thurston County
Storm and Surface Water Utility
929 Lakeridge Drive S.W.
Olympia, WA 98502



Ditches and Swales Keep them Clean and Clear



**This grass-lined
swale helps prevent
flooding, erosion
and pollution!**

Ditches and Swales: Your Connection to Stormwater Drainage Facilities

Did you know that the ditches and swales you see along Thurston County roads are part of a county-wide storm drainage system? These facilities are designed to reduce flooding, erosion and pollution caused by fast-moving, contaminated stormwater runoff. Once the runoff enters these facilities, it either infiltrates into the ground (our source of drinking water), or is conveyed through catch basins (storm drains) directly into a nearby creek, lake or Puget Sound.



What is Stormwater Runoff?



Rain and melting snow that flows off rooftops, streets, lawns, businesses and farmland is stormwater runoff.

Stormwater runoff picks up excess fertilizer and pesticides, oil, sand, leaves, grass clippings and many other pollutants. Unlike sewage, stormwater does not flow into a treatment plant to be cleaned, so it is critical that we all do our part to prevent pollution from getting into stormwater runoff.



Keep it Clean and Clear

In order for ditches and swales to function properly, they must remain “clean and clear” so stormwater runoff can flow unobstructed through the drainage system. Grass-lined swales are meant to filter and absorb pollutants in the runoff before the water is conveyed to a catch basin or stormwater pond.

If you fill a portion of the swale or ditch with yard debris, such as branch cuttings or grass clippings, or if you add rocks or beauty bark, it can cause flooding, damage the neighborhood stormwater pond, or add pollutants to streams, lakes or Puget Sound.



What to Do with Yard Debris



Branches, grass clippings and other yard waste can be turned into valuable compost, either in your backyard or at a local composting facility.

- ◆ **Buy a compost bin** for about half the cost at www.compostbinthurstoncounty.com.
- ◆ **Have your yard waste collected by your garbage/recycling hauler**, or haul it yourself to a yard-debris drop-off site. The materials will be turned into compost. For details, visit www.ThurstonSolidWaste.org and click the “Organics” link.
- ◆ **For larger branches, rent a chipper** and make mulch to put around flowers, trees and shrubs. Consider organizing a work party to save rental costs and labor.

Neighborhood Facilities

Your neighborhood may be required to inspect and maintain its stormwater facilities, such as swales, ditches, or stormwater ponds. Contact your homeowners association or call the Thurston County Storm and Surface Water Utility at (360) 754-4681. Information is also available by visiting www.co.thurston.wa.us/stormwater and clicking on the “Stormwater Utility” link.

Easy Ways to Keep it Clean

- ◆ Take your car to a commercial car wash.
- ◆ Pick up pet waste, bag it and trash it. Get a free clip-on bag dispenser for your dog’s leash at Thurston County Building 4, 929 Lakeridge Drive S.W., Room 100, Olympia, WA 98502. (Thurston County residents only, one per household.)
- ◆ Contain and repair automobile fluid leaks.
- ◆ Avoid power-washing – sweep instead.
- ◆ Use fewer pesticides and fertilizers.
- ◆ Attend a free workshop on maintaining neighborhood stormwater facilities. For more information visit www.co.thurston.wa.us/stormwater/facilities/facilities-home.html
- ◆ Dispose of household hazardous waste at HazoHouse, located at the Thurston County Waste and Recovery Center, 2418 Hogum Bay Road N.E. near Hawks Prairie.
- ◆ Join Stream Team – plant trees, help monitor local streams, take free classes and more! Visit www.streamteam.info.

