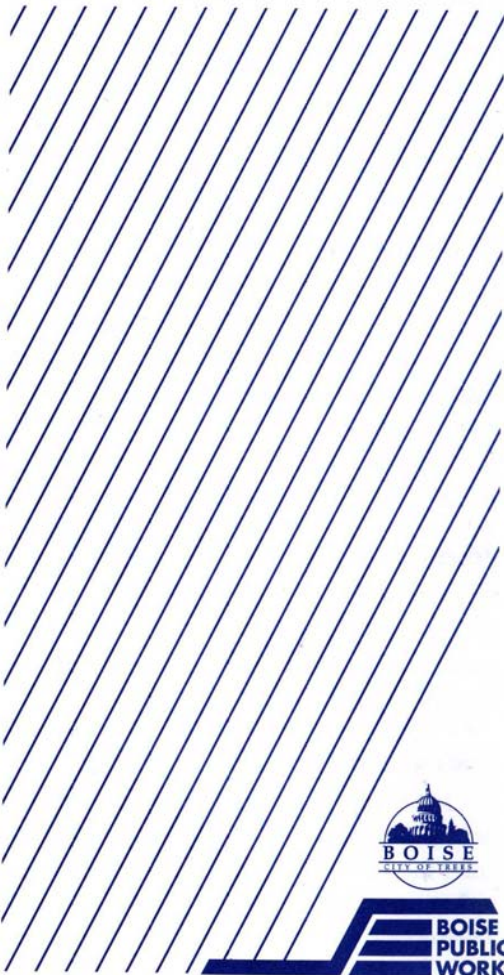


RiverCare Tips to Protect Water Quality

StormWater
Best Management Practices



RiverCare & StormWater

*Or, how can you take
care of the Boise River?*

A clean river begins at home. Things you do around the house or in the yard can pollute the storm water, the Boise River, and the environment. Here are some commonly asked questions about storm water.

What is storm water?

Storm water is water from rain or melting snow that does not immediately soak into the ground. Instead, storm water flows across hard surfaces such as concrete, asphalt pavement, or roofs and picks up pollutants like lawn chemicals, automobile oil and grease, airborne dust and sediment, and pet wastes.

Where does storm water go?

Storm water that flows into storm drains goes to either the Boise River or to underground tanks that allow the water to seep into the ground water.

Does storm water get treated?

No. Many people mistakenly believe household chemicals, oil, paint, or yard wastes that enter the storm drain system are “cleaned up” at wastewater treatment plants.

They aren't!

Can storm water affect our water quality?

Yes. Pollutants in storm water can harm animals and people. For example, lawn chemicals in storm water can kill aquatic insects that birds and fish eat; automobile oil and grease, and sediment can clog fish gills; and pet wastes can contain harmful bacteria and viruses that pose a risk to human health. Pollutants in storm water can also poison the ground water that Boise residents use for drinking water.

What activities can pollute storm water?

Activities such as pouring oil or household chemicals down a storm drain, sweeping or blowing yard waste into a gutter, or over-applying lawn chemicals can pollute storm water.

What can I do to help?

Follow the tips in this brochure to reduce or prevent pollutants from getting into the storm water, the Boise River, and our ground water. The steps you take to control pollutants in storm water today may eliminate the need for costly storm water treatment facilities in the future.



HomeCare

If you do the work yourself

- Use up latex (water-based) and oil-based paint. Donate usable, leftover paint to a non-profit organization.
- Take un-usable paints, thinners, and household chemicals to the Ada County Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility or any hazardous waste drop off site.
- Sweep your driveway and sidewalk. Avoid hosing down your driveway and sidewalk where the water can run into a street or storm drain.
- Use biodegradable soap when washing exterior windows or buildings. Pour the excess wash water on your lawn or down a sink or toilet.
- Wash tools and equipment over a grass or soil-covered area where wash water will not enter a street or storm drain.
- Dispose of dirty carpet cleaning solution down a sink or toilet, not a storm drain.
- Control algae in your pool by regulating chlorine levels and by using a pool cover to block sunlight. Avoid using copper-based algae treatments.
- Discharge pool or spa water to the sanitary sewer or determine when the chlorine residual is zero; wait 24 hours, then use for irrigation water.

If you hire someone

- Make sure that painting contractors clean brushes and dispose of paint residues properly, not in a street or a storm drain.
- Ask your pool service contractor to use non-copper algae treatments in your pool. Also ask them to dispose of filter backwash in an area (preferably soil-covered) that will not drain to a street or a storm drain.
- Talk to your housecleaning and window cleaning professionals about disposing wash water on your lawn or down a sink or toilet.
- Ask your professional carpet cleaner to avoid dumping dirty cleaning solution down a storm drain. Have them dump the solution in a utility sink, toilet or other drain that is connected to the sanitary sewer. They can also dump the dirty cleaning solution onto a lawn.



YardCare

If you do the work yourself

- Leave lawn clippings on your lawn. Studies have shown that clippings can add substantial amounts of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium back to the soil, reducing the need for fertilizer.
- Plant drought-tolerant plants. These plants thrive in Boise's dry climate and use less water than water-loving plants such as aspens or Kentucky bluegrass.
- Start composting your yard and garden waste. The waste decomposes into organic matter that can be used again in your garden to improve the soil.
- Use less-toxic ways of controlling weeds. Hand-pull or dig weeds rather than using herbicides.
- Use less-toxic ways of controlling pests, such as spraying insects with water or insecticidal soap, using beneficial insects, or picking insects off of plants.
- Clean up pet waste by picking it up, bagging it, and placing it in the trash. You can also flush it down a toilet. Avoid placing pet waste in a gutter or storm drain.
- Sweep or rake up leaves and bag for Boise's leaf recycling program. Avoid sweeping or raking leaves into a street or storm drain.

If you hire someone

- Ask your lawn maintenance contractor to apply only the amount of fertilizer necessary for your turf type. Contact the University of Idaho Cooperative Extension System for recommended fertilizer application rates. Avoid over-applying fertilizers.
- Make sure your lawn maintenance contractor does not blow or rake leaves or other lawn debris into a street or storm drain. Ask them to collect yard waste for composting.



CarCare

If you do the work yourself

- Maintain your car regularly. A well-running car saves money and produces less pollution than a poorly maintained car.
- Use a drain pan to catch automotive fluids when changing oil, antifreeze, or other fluids.
- Recycle used motor oil through the Boise curbside recycling program or take the used oil to a nearby Q-lube. You can also take motor oil or oil filters to the Ada County Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility or any hazardous waste drop off site.
- Take used car batteries, antifreeze, and engine cleaners and degreasers to the Ada County Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility or any hazardous waste drop off site.
- Use sawdust or cat litter to soak up automotive fluid drips or spills. Sweep up debris and throw it in the garbage, not in a storm drain.
- Use biodegradable soap to wash your car. Pour the excess wash water on your lawn or down a sink or toilet.

If you hire someone

- Use an auto service center that recycles oil, antifreeze, or freon.
- Use a mobile lube and oil service that recycles oil, oil filters, or antifreeze. Also, make sure the lube technician is using drop cloths to catch drips or automotive fluid spills when changing automobile fluids.
- Ask your auto service center if they carry low-copper or no-copper brake pads. Worn brake pads contribute copper and other metals to the roadways which can be washed into our storm drains.

