



## STOP TRASH & HARMFUL POLLUTANTS FROM ENDING UP IN THE OCEAN AND ENVIRONMENT



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### WHAT IS STORMWATER POLLUTION?

Storm drains are intended to take rainwater straight to the ocean to help avoid flooding in the area. Rainwater and runoff from sprinklers or hoses carry contaminants such as litter, animal waste, automobile fluids, fertilizers and pesticides into the storm drains, polluting our Surfside neighborhood and waterways. This creates health risks (especially for children), kills marine life and contributes to local flooding and beach “no swim” advisories.

### ISN'T STORMWATER TREATED BEFORE GOING INTO THE OCEAN, LIKE SEWER WATER?

No, the storm drain system is separate from the sewage system. Storm drains are intended to take rainwater straight to the ocean to avoid area flooding. Storm drain water is not treated before flowing directly into Biscayne Bay, making it everyone’s responsibility to make sure storm drains and waterways are free of pollutants.

### HOW DOES STORMWATER POLLUTION AFFECT MY COMMUNITY?

Stormwater pollution can also have serious impacts on your neighborhood. Litter and animal waste in the streets and storm drains can significantly degrade the appearance of the neighborhood and lower property values, lead to unsanitary conditions, and contribute to flooded streets during the rainy season or severe weather events.

Additionally, stormwater pollution, such as insecticides, pesticides, paint solvents, used motor oil and other automobile fluids, can affect drinking water, pose increased health risks, poison marine life, and create high concentrations of toxic metals. Animals and people can become sick or die from eating contaminated fish and shellfish or ingesting polluted water.

## REPORT ILLEGAL DUMPING

Illegal dumping of garbage bags, tires or construction waste in Miami-Dade County is a criminal offense. To report illegal dumping in Surfside, contact the Code Compliance Division at 305-861-4863, extension 230 or call the Surfside Police non-emergency number at 305-861-4862.

Alternatively, residents can call the Miami-Dade County Environmental Complaint Desk at 305-372-6955 or email [environmentalcomplaints@miamidade.gov](mailto:environmentalcomplaints@miamidade.gov).

## FOR MORE INFORMATION OR QUESTIONS

### SURFSIDE TOWN CODE ON LANDSCAPE REGULATIONS:

[https://library.municode.com/fl/surfside/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances?nodeId=PTIICO\\_CH90ZO\\_ARTVIIIILARE&showChanges=true](https://library.municode.com/fl/surfside/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIICO_CH90ZO_ARTVIIIILARE&showChanges=true)

### FLORIDA-FRIENDLY LANDSCAPING PRINCIPLES:

[https://ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/homeowners/nine\\_principles.htm](https://ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/homeowners/nine_principles.htm)

### MIAMI-DADE COUNTY:

<https://www.miamidade.gov/environment/>

### FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION - STORMWATER PROGRAM:

[www.floridadep.gov/water/stormwater](http://www.floridadep.gov/water/stormwater)

## HOW CAN I PREVENT STORMWATER POLLUTION?

The improper disposal of garbage and waste, in addition to various pollutants, can end up in the ocean and impact the environment, your health and harm marine life.

Please do your part to keep Surfside clean and stop stormwater pollution by following these tips:



- **Don't put anything in storm drains.** Storm drains carry surface runoff directly to the waterways and ocean without treatment. Make sure that runoff carries only rainwater.
- **Avoid throwing litter into the street.** Trash-laden gutters increase neighborhood pollution and clogs storm drains, causing street flooding.
- **Be smart when you apply pesticides or fertilizers.** Do not apply pesticides or fertilizers before it rains. Not only will you lose most of the chemicals through runoff, but you will also be harming the environment. Do not over-water after application. Read the label and do not apply more than recommended. Also, consider using safer pest control methods whenever possible. The Town of Surfside reinforces the Florida-Friendly Landscaping principles and requirements in the Town Code.
- **Bag compost grass, tree limbs, leaves and other yard waste.** Soggy yard waste is a major contributor to clogged storm drains and street and neighborhood flooding.
- **Use yard waste as mulch and natural fertilizer, or use an organic mulch.** Nearly 20 percent of the waste buried in landfills is from our yards like grass and tree trimmings.
- **Don't flush, even if in a rush.** When flushed down a toilet, sink or drain, household hazardous waste goes through the sewage system to treatment plants not equipped to handle hazardous waste. This includes flushable wipes, which are typically made with synthetic materials, plastics or polyesters that do not break down.
- **Don't use harsh, abrasive or toxic chemicals around the house.** Select water-based products over solvent-based products when available (e.g. paint, glue, shoe polish). Also, avoid aerosol sprays. Choose a pump spray or other alternatives.
- **Pick up after your pet.** When left on the ground, animal waste washes down storm drains and can be a major source of bacteria and contaminate our beaches. Violators will be cited and fined.
- **Repair car oil leaks and recycle your motor oil.** Dispose of used auto fluids and batteries at designated drop-off or recycling locations.
- **Use biodegradable and environmentally-friendly products to clean your car.** Also wash your car on a grassy area so the water permeates into the ground instead of the stormwater drain system.
- **Keep sanitation workers safe.** When thrown in with the regular trash, household hazardous waste can sicken or injure sanitation workers. In addition, landfills are not intended or permitted for those types of wastes, which could impact groundwater. Safely dispose of these materials at hazardous waste drop-off events, which are regularly hosted by the Surfside Public Works Department.