



THE MAIN DRAIN

STORMWATER NEWS YOU CAN USE

A Publication of the Portsmouth Department of Public Utilities/Public Works -

Division of Stormwater Management

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BEFORE YOU BLOW, you should know:

Spring is finally here and it brings with it warmer weather and sunshine-filled days. It also draws many of us outside, calling our names to give our lawns some extra care to make them look green and healthy.

While we are eagerly cutting, pruning, fertilizing, and clipping to create that beautiful curb appeal, we often do not realize that our landscaping activities can be detrimental to the very environment that we are trying to beautify! The improper handling of grass clippings, yard wastes, leaves, fertilizers and herbicides often causes excess pollutants to end up in our stormwater systems and nearby waterways.

One of the most common mistakes we make is to blow leaves and grass clippings into the street, storm drains or drainage ditches. Though it may seem insignificant, blowing leaves and grass clippings into storm drains



and ditches not only pollutes waterways by adding extra nutrients, but also blocks drainage and causes street flooding. The underground storm drainage pipes and drainage ditches are designed for one thing and one thing only: to carry stormwater.

It is important to note that most Hampton Roads cities have codes that make dumping, blowing, or washing anything into a storm drain or drainage ditch a crime. That includes grass clippings and leaves. In some cities, such an offense is a Class One Misdemeanor, carrying a maximum penalty of up to one year in jail and/or a fine up to \$2,500. (In Portsmouth, it is classified as a Misdemeanor with a \$1,000 fine.)

The same penalties apply to the open disposal of motor oil or other hazardous wastes.

So . . . next time you get working in your yard, take the time to rake, sweep and bag up your clippings. Once collected, you should put them out with your regular trash or use them in a compost pile. As an alternative, you can even leave them on your lawn. As they decompose, they will actually add nitrogen back into your soil!

STORMWATER TIP OF THE MONTH:

REPORT VIOLATORS!

If you see someone deliberately rake, blow, sweep or throw anything into the storm drainage system (which includes the pipes, drainage inlets, gutters or drainage ditches), call the Police "Pollution Patrol" non-emergency number at 393-5300.