

What is an MS4?

An MS4 is a "Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System", many of which are considered as "regulated", and must be permitted through the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP). The majority of the Townships and Boroughs in which you live are considered regulated MS4's.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the PADEP require each MS4 to educate its residents on Stormwater Pollution Prevention. There are many ways that we as a resident and/or homeowner can help.

Here are some of the main items that are listed for you to help your community:

1. First and foremost, NEVER dump anything down a storm sewer inlet or into a drainage ditch - Nothing should go into these systems except stormwater.
2. Use fertilizers sparingly and as directed by the manufacturer's instructions; sweep excess fertilizer off driveways, sidewalks and gutters back onto grassy areas so it doesn't get washed into the storm sewer.
3. Compost your yard waste and/or consider "grasscycling" which is the act of allowing grass clippings to remain on the lawn after mowing to return nutrients back to the soil. Did you know that the grass decreases the oxygen in the water when it decomposes? Therefore, if the grass clippings are washed into a stream or river, it will decrease the oxygen in the water that is needed to sustain the aquatic life.
4. Use less toxic pesticides, follow label instructions and learn how to prevent pest problems.
5. Direct downspouts away from paved surfaces; vegetate bare spots in your yard; and consider a rain garden or planting additional native plants in your yard to capture runoff.
6. Have your car washed at a commercial car wash where rinse water is treated; if you must wash your car at home, wash it on the grass, not the driveway so that the rinse water, which now contains detergents, does not go into the storm sewer but will be naturally filtered through the grass and soil.
7. Check your car for leaks and make sure you recycle any used motor oil. Did you know that 4 quarts of oil is capable of forming an 8-acre oil slick if dumped or spilled down a storm drain?
8. Pick up after your pets! Did you know that an average size dog dropping contains 3 Billion Fecal Coliform Bacteria which can be harmful to your health? Who wants to step in that or have any of those piles drain into our recreational and drinking water supplies?
9. Owners of septic tanks should have their septic tanks pumped and the system inspected regularly.
10. Excess salt and other deicing chemicals can harm aquatic life in our streams and impact drinking water supplies. Consider alternate forms of deicing such as Calcium Chloride (CaCl₂) and Calcium Magnesium Acetate (CMA); shovel snow

BEFORE it turns to ice to limit the need for deicing; and shovel the snow onto grassy or permeable surfaces so as the snow, which now has chemicals in it, can soak into the ground rather than flow into a nearby storm drain or stream.

11. Check your Township or Borough's regulations for the permissible method of disposing of chlorinated pool water and backwash water. Typically, draining pool water discharge to your street and storm sewer system is prohibited. Most municipalities require these waters to be slowly discharged over lawn areas and some allow for discharge in the municipal sanitary sewer system.
12. Never store uncontained hazardous materials, or equipment with pollutants on their exterior housing, that could spill or be washed into the storm system by a rain event. If these items can't be stored indoors, make sure they are securely covered. All Hazardous Materials should be disposed of properly and NEVER dumped into the storm sewer system. Check your county's website for Hazardous Waste Collection Events.

Source: Boucher & James