

Keep Clutter out of the Gutter! - Rainy Season Pollution Prevention Advisory

The rainy season is here and the City of Rancho Palos Verdes has been working to ensure that catch basins and gutters are clear of debris and are prepared to carry thousands of gallons of water off city streets. Stormwater pollution is caused when rain flushes items directly into storm drains. Storm drains are NOT connected to the sanitary sewer or treatment plants. They are designed to prevent flooding by conveying water away from our developed areas and straight into creeks, streams and the ocean. Discarded cigarette butts and overuse of pesticides or fertilizers on lawns and in gardens are significant contributors of pollution. The pollutants carried in untreated stormwater are the single biggest contributor to degradation of our oceans.

It doesn't matter how far you are from the beach, eventually the contents from **all** the waterways, streams and gutters in Los Angeles County flow out to the ocean. Approximately 100 million gallons of contaminated water and debris drain through the LA County storm drain system each *dry* day. However on rainy days, the daily flow can increase to 10 billion gallons.

Everyone can help keep the pollution out of the streets, the gutters and finally the ocean. What can residents and businesses do to help? There are several steps that everyone can take to reduce the impact of stormwater pollution on our beaches and ocean:

Clean Up the Yard

Clean up loose debris in yards, swales and hillsides. By properly disposing of grass, leaves, shrubs, pet waste and other organic matter more frequently — less will wash into storm drains.

Decrease the use of lawn and garden care products such as pesticides, insecticides, weed killers, fertilizers, herbicides and other chemicals. Avoid over irrigation which washes chemicals into the gutter and storm drains. (Use the free [irrigation calculator tool](#) on the City's home page!)

Household Hazardous Waste in Your Home:

Materials such as used motor oil, filters, paint, paint thinner, pesticides, pool chemicals, used needles and unwanted or expired prescriptions are toxic to the environment if not disposed of properly. Do not apply chemicals to lawns and gardens before watering or predicted rainstorms.

Take unwanted hazardous products to a local permanent collection facility. Gaffey SAFE Collection Center is located at: 1400 N. Gaffey, in San Pedro. They accept such material every Saturday and Sunday from 9 am to 3 pm. Additionally, there are many Household

Hazardous Waste Roundup Event hosted by the Los Angeles County. For more information on upcoming Household Hazardous Waste Round events near you or to visit one of the free permanent collection centers call 1 (888) CLEAN LA or visit www.888CleanLa.com.

Sweeping Instead of Hosing:

A simple task that requires a simple change - use a rake or broom, rather than a hose, to clean up debris. If you have a gardening service, ask them to refrain from using leaf blowers to blow debris into the street. This will prevent the debris from being washed into the storm drain system.

If you use your yard trimmings and leaves as compost, make sure it is contained! Attend one of the Los Angeles Smart Gardening Workshop to learn about composting; visit www.smartgardening.com for upcoming workshops near you.

Vehicle Maintenance:

Keep your vehicles in good working order in order to prevent leaks. Fluids dripped or spilled onto streets will be washed into the storm drain system, which in turn, drains to the ocean. When you're changing car fluids, make sure to use a drip pan to catch spills. If a spill does occur apply absorbent materials, such as kitty litter, to soak up leaks. Sweep up the residue and dispose of the waste properly. When washing your car at home, use soap sparingly, divert washwater to landscaped areas and pour your bucket of soapy water down the sink. Never wash your car in the street.

Recycle your used motor oil and filters at the following certified centers in the city:

O'Reilly Auto Parts (formerly Kragen)	29227 S. Western Avenue	(310) 514-0478
Valvoline Instant Oil Change	29519 Western Avenue	(310) 519-8295

*Please note that it is advisable to call before taking oil to any of the listed centers.

This is part of the city's stormwater pollution prevention program's effort to keep Rancho Palos Verdes and our ocean environment clean. To learn more about the city's environmental programs and upcoming events you can participate in, go to <http://palosverdes.com/rpv/publicworks> or call the Public Works Department at (310) 544-5252.