

RICHLAND COUNTY STORMWATER MANAGEMENT DIVISION

Frequently Asked Questions

Richland County employees are also citizens and want to give you information, help you answer questions, and address your stormwater concerns.

Stormwater Questions

What is stormwater?

Stormwater is any water that falls on the ground when it rains or snows.

What is stormwater runoff?

Stormwater that flows across the ground, especially across paved surfaces.

Runoff can also include water from washing a car or watering a lawn.



Where do storm drains go?

Directly to the nearest stream, river, pond, or lake. In Richland County, water that goes through a storm drain is not treated.

What can go in a storm drain?

Only rain should go down a storm drain!

Why should I care about stormwater?

Stormwater runoff washes any pollutants on the ground into our waterbodies; and people use those waterbodies for many purposes including swimming, fishing, boating, and as a source for our drinking water. When water is polluted we're unable to use it as readily, if at all.

What are different types of stormwater pollution?

Anything on the ground surface that is washed away when it rains is considered pollution. That includes trash, pet waste, dirt, lawn clippings, household chemicals, motor oil, kitchen grease, pesticides, and fertilizers. Anything that goes down a storm drain other than stormwater is also considered pollution.

What can I do to keep stormwater clean?

Lots of things! Picking up pet waste and properly disposing of it, cleaning up trash in your yard, not throwing cigarette butts on the ground, and taking used motor oil to a recycling facility (such as GOFER) are small things you can do. You can also participate in river clean-up days, install a rain barrel, or join a local watershed association. And report any signs of stormwater pollution.

Who should I call if I see pollution, someone dumping in a storm drain, or a suspicious discharge?

Any sightings of an illicit discharge or illegal dumping should be reported to the Ombudsmans office at 803-929-6000.



Where does the water go when I flush my toilet?

Water from our showers, toilets, and sinks are considered wastewater, and are carried through sewer lines to wastewater treatment plants.

What is non-point source pollution?

Pollution that doesn't come from one specific source. Some forms of pollution (known as point source pollution) come from one specific location, such as a pipe running from a factory. Other forms of pollution can come from all over an area, maybe an entire city, and we can't point to the specific source. Examples are trash and car fluids.

What does non-point source pollution have to do with stormwater?

When it rains, various forms of non-point sources pollution become stormwater pollution because anything (and nearly everything) on the ground gets washed into waterbodies.

There's been a lot of rain lately and now my yard is flooded. Who should I call?

For general flooding concerns, call the Stormwater Hotline at 803-929-6000. It is also the number for the Ombudsman's office. Your flooding may be an issue that should be handled by a department other than the SH₂O, so the Ombudsman will direct it to the proper Division. If a breached pond is your concern, not only should you call the Stormwater Hotline/Ombudsman, but you should call SCDHEC at (803) 898-DHEC (3432).

Stormwater Management Questions

What is NPDES?

NPDES is an acronym for National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System. It is a permit program that controls point-source water pollution.

What is an MS4?

An MS4, or Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System, is an NPDES permit for municipalities designed to help reduce the amount of non-point source pollution that is collected in our nation's waterbodies.

What is a best management practice (BMP)?

Although there is not one specific and direct solution to poor water quality, there are different actions that people perform in order to reduce the amount of stormwater pollution and those are known as best management practices, or BMPs. BMPs can be structural (rain garden, detention pond, bioswales) or non-structural (changing daily habits).

What is a notice of violation (NOV)?

NOVs are citations that are given out when a person or entity violates one of the County ordinances. For most NOVs, the offender has 30 days to complete the recommended action. After 30 days the offender can be fined up to \$1,092.50.



Public Works Questions

What does the Public Works Department do?

The Public Works Department is responsible for providing a variety of structural services to Richland County residents.

What divisions are under Public Works?

Engineering—responsible for county infrastructure and managing County assets.

Roads and Drainage—responsible for construction and maintenance of roads and drainage systems.

Stormwater Management—responsible for managing stormwater quality and drainage support.

If you have additional questions about stormwater or need to file a complaint, call the Stormwater Hotline at 803-929-6000.

And you can also find us online [@RCSH2O!](#)

