



## IMPROPER WASTE DISPOSAL IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD?

If you see somebody dumping pet waste, grass clippings, oil, antifreeze, or anything else down their driveway or directly in the gutter or storm inlets, call your local municipality. Record as much information about the incident and parties involved such as name, location, what the waste looked like, quantity, etc.

One type of waste is PET WASTE. It is not the predominant or most toxic pollutant in urban streams, but it is one of many small sources of pollution that can cumulatively have a big impact if left unmanaged. Pet waste can contain bacteria and parasites, as well as organic matter and nutrients, notably nitrogen and phosphorous.

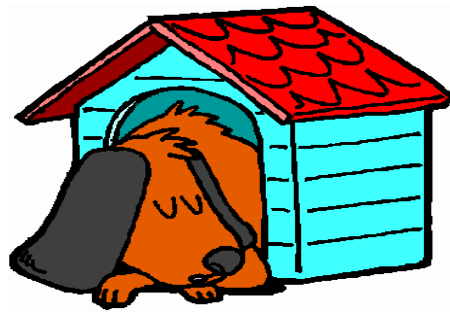
Some of the diseases that can be spread from pet waste are:

- **Campylobacteriosis** - a bacterial infection that causes diarrhea in humans.
- **Salmonellosis** - the most common bacterial infection transmitted to humans from animals. Symptoms include fever, muscle aches, headache, vomiting, and diarrhea.
- **Toxocaris** - roundworms transmitted from animals to humans. Symptoms include vision loss, rash, fever, or cough.

In addition to these diseases, the organic matter and nutrients contained in pet waste can degrade water quality. The waste decays when pet waste is washed into a surface water body, the waste decays. This process of breaking down the organic matter uses up dissolved oxygen and releases ammonia. Low oxygen levels, increased ammonia, and warm summer water temperatures can kill fish. Excess phosphorous and nitrogen added to surface waters can lead to cloudy, green water from accelerated algae and weed growth. Decay of this extra organic matter can depress oxygen levels which kills organisms. Objectionable odors can also occur. Flies and other pest insects can also increase when pet waste is disposed of improperly becoming a nuisance and adding another vector for disease transmission.

Managing pet waste properly is something that everyone can do to make a difference in their respective watersheds. Truly proper individual actions result in significant water quality improvement when carried out by the majority. Unlike some forms of stormwater pollutants, pet waste can be easily and economically be managed by you the individual.

Sometimes, the '**out of sight, out of mind**' attitude exists regarding pet waste. Employing this flawed thinking; waste is often disposed of in the street stormwater catch basin. Aside from dumping directly into a water body, this is the single *worst* place to dispose of waste. In the next rainstorm, the accumulated waste is transported quickly and efficiently to the nearby receiving water way polluting it.



### **Proper Onsite Disposal:**

#### ***Flush it***

Pet waste itself (not the litter or bedding material) can be flushed down the toilet. The water from the toilet goes either to a septic system onsite, or a sewage treatment plant that removes most pollutants before the water reaches its outlet. The used litter should be disposed of in a securely closed bag in the trash.

Never add the waste as a fertilizer to the garden or to the compost pile. The disease organisms will continue to survive and create a significant health risk.

#### ***Trash it***

Check local ordinances first. Putting pet waste in the trash is against the law in some communities. Even if legal and easy, it's not the best solution. Waste can contribute to the landfill problems in the state.

Here are some reasons pet owners have given **for not picking up** after their pets:

- It eventually goes away
- Too much work
- On the edge of my property
- It's in my yard
- It's in the woods
- Not prepared
- No reason
- Small dog, small waste
- Use as fertilizer
- Sanitary reasons
- Own a cat or other kind of pet

Here are some reasons pet owners have given **for picking up** after their pets:

- It's the law
- Environmental reasons
- Hygiene/health reasons
- Neighborhood courtesy
- It should be done
- Keep the yard clean

### **Conclusion:**

The problem of pet waste disposal in suburbia is a real one. Research has indicated strongly that water quality is negatively impacted by this pollutant. However, unlike many other sources of water degradation in the state, improper pet waste management is a dilemma that can be easily corrected through education by organizations and common sense actions by individuals.

Insert brochure link.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CHECK OUT THE FOLLOWING WEBSITES:

EPA: [http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater/menuofbmps/index.cfm?action=factsheet\\_results&view=specific&bmp=4](http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater/menuofbmps/index.cfm?action=factsheet_results&view=specific&bmp=4)

UWEX: <http://learningstore.uwex.edu/Pet-Waste-and-Water-Quality-P612.aspx>

<http://clean-water.uwex.edu/pubs/pdf/pet.pdf>

WI DNR: <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/ce/eeek/earth/yardcare.htm>