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Macomb County Public Works Office

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES for CLEAN WATER

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DRAINS - Do's and Don'ts

The Macomb County Public Works Office partners with local municipalities, businesses, and residents to promote the best management practices for clean water to enhance quality of life in Macomb County. When it rains, water that drains from buildings, roads or other hard surfaces deposits directly into our local storm drains that ultimately ends in Lake St. Clair. It is critical that we eliminate pollution and other contaminants before they enter our streams, rivers and lakes. Clean water is vital not only to the quality of life in Macomb County, but can serve as a critical component of economic development in our communities.



WHAT IS A COUNTY DRAIN?

Drains come in various forms, including natural or artificial creeks, or ditches, underground pipes that carry storm-water, as well as streams. Some drains, such as roadside ditches, may be the responsibility of the Department of Roads or private landowners.

For a map of county drains in your area, visit <https://publicworks.macombgov.org/PublicWorks-drainmaps>



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

It is important to keep our waterways free of trash, natural debris and any other harmful waste or chemicals that could compromise the water quality of our local waterways. If bacteria and chemicals enter the waterways it can create a health hazard and even close down beaches. The drinking water supply can also be adversely affected by polluted water from the drain system.



If I live near a drain, what can and can't I do?



Do not build a permanent structure on the drain. e.g.: shed, garage, or pool

If you want to build any permanent structures, it needs to be out of the drain easement.



Do not dump grass clippings, leaves and other debris

Debris can clog a drain. Natural debris causes algae problems which impacts water quality, and increases chance of flooding.



Do not dispose of pet waste in the drain

Always dispose of pet waste in the trash to avoid polluting our water with E. coli. Pick up waste before watering your lawn.

Scoop it, Bag it, Trash it!



Do not dig in the drain to alter the grade

If alterations are made to the drain, it will be at risk of erosion.



Do not dispose of household products in the drain

Household products can contain toxic chemicals and must be taken to a household hazardous waste collection. e.g.: car fluids, oil-based products, & pesticides.



Use the drain easement

Landowners with a drain easement on their property may use the easement but they may not build anything permanent on the property or use it for any type of storage including garbage, natural debris, or rubbish.



Limit use of fertilizer/pesticides

Read and follow the manufacturer's application instructions and make sure fertilizers/pesticides do not enter the drain.



Wash my car

Wash your car on the grass. Washing your car on pavement sends polluted water into the drains. Washing your car on the lawn allows the ground to filter water naturally.



Remove blockages in response to flooding

Prevent backup and maintain flow of the drain by cleaning out debris such as limbs, phragmites, or anything naturally not belonging in the drain.



Permission required to install

Prior to installing a fence or bridge on the drain, you will need to receive permission from MCPWO.



Phragmites

Phragmites is a type of grass with a rigid stem and a fluffy/feather-like flower that can reach heights from 6-15 feet. This plant is invasive and can be found commonly in ditches, wetlands, and stream banks. For more information about phragmites control and what you can do, please check out the resources tab on our website!