



## PET WASTE

When left in public areas or your yard, bacteria, parasites, and fungi on pet waste can be transported by rainfall and irrigation water into storm drains which lead directly to our local creeks. If discharged or disposed of improperly, domestic animal wastes can lead to bacteria, nitrogen, phosphorus, and lower oxygen levels, which are harmful to water quality and creek habitats. Low oxygen levels and ammonia can kill fish during warm weather and nutrients encourage weed and algae growth. This causes the water to become overly fertile, turning it cloudy and green – making the water unsafe for swimming, boating, fishing, and drinking.

### HOW ARE THE STORM DRAIN AND SANITARY SEWER SYSTEMS DIFFERENT?

The storm drain system transports rainwater to local creeks, rivers, and the ocean. This system was created to prevent flooding within communities and homes.

All water and materials that enter the storm drain system are untreated.

The sanitary sewer is a plumbed system that transports used water from buildings to a wastewater collection and treatment facility, where the water and sewage is treated.

If you see an outdoor drain and are unsure of its use, assume it is a storm drain and do not discharge wash water to it.

Clean creeks are important. They provide vital fish habitat, recreation, and add to the beauty of our city.

### WHAT TO KNOW

- Though solids may quickly dissolve, pathogens may remain for months.
- No watershed is naturally prepared to accommodate the amount of waste produced by domesticated animals.
- Never bury mammal waste near where food will be grown or in compost to be used to grow food.
- Be aware of backyard drains and any runoff from your property. Clean up areas near wells, drains, ditches and waterways.
- Always remove waste from areas where children play.

### DISPOSAL GUIDE

- Pick up any outdoor pet waste daily, especially prior to any rain or irrigation.
- It is recommended to tie waste securely in a bag.
- Place waste only in trash bin.
- Use dry cleanup methods only (i.e. scoop, shovel, rags, vacuum, etc.).

### CAT

- Use an indoor litter box or provide a sheltered litter box for outdoor cats.
- Pour, scoop and scrape all used litter into a plastic garbage bag for disposal.
- Spray the bottom of the litter box with cleaning product and wipe with paper towels before refilling with fresh litter.

## DOG PARKS, TRAIL USE, AND OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

- Follow posted rules.
- Bring your own, and extra, dog waste bags.
- Pick up after your pet immediately.

*Note: Many communities have “pooper scooper” laws that govern pet waste cleanup. Some of these laws specifically require anyone who takes an animal off their property to carry a bag, shovel, or pooper scooper.*

## WASHING / BEST PRACTICES

- Collect wash water and filter with a wire mesh strainer to remove solids prior to discharge to the sanitary sewer.
- Throw away solids in the trash. Fur/excess hair or other solids present in the wash water can cause blockages in the sewer system.
- Pour filtered wash water into the sanitary sewer through a bathtub, sink, toilet, or sewer clean-out.
- Always drain wash water to the sewer. Water should never be discharged to a street, gutter, or storm drain.

**Products labeled “nontoxic” and “biodegradable” can still harm wildlife if they enter the storm drain system. These products are prohibited discharges to the storm drain system.**

## BACTERIA, PARASITES, AND INFECTIONS THAT CAN BE TRANSMITTED FROM PET WASTE

- Campylobacteriosis, Cryptosporidium, Tinea, Toxocarasis, and Toxoplasma Gondii.
- Other examples associated with pet waste are hookworms, fecal coliform bacteria, Giardiasis, Salmonella, Brucellosis, Yersinia enterocolitica, and Leptospirosis.

*An Environmental Protection Agency cited source (George Heufelder, personal communication, 1992) estimates that two or three days' worth of droppings from a population of about 100 dogs would contribute enough bacteria to temporarily close a bay and all watershed areas within 20 miles of it to swimming and shell fishing.*

**It is illegal to allow anything other than rainwater to be discharged to a gutter or storm drain.**

## REPORT SPILLS HERE

City of Sonoma: (707) 933-2229