

SHOULD I CARE ABOUT STORMWATER, AND IF I DO, HOW

CAN I HELP?

Most municipalities in the Chesapeake Bay watershed are required by the state environmental agency (PADEP) and the federal environmental agency (EPA) to participate in a program known as MS4. MS4 stands for Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System and stormwater from an MS4 municipality must be handled in a specific manner prior to discharge to a waterway which drains to the Chesapeake Bay.

There are many things which can be done by government agencies to improve or reduce the quality of stormwater flowing into drains and rivers. But can the average homeowner help? Absolutely!

Consider the following:

Can I reduce the volume of stormwater leaving my property?

Not often thought about, are sources of water that flow off of our property such as rain gutters, sump pumps, and foundation drains. Many times, this water can be diverted to pervious areas of our lot where it can be used for vegetable gardens, flower beds, small rain gardens, or simply to soak into the ground. Rain barrels can also collect roof water that can be used rather than turning on the hose and running up the water bill.

What else can I do?

Be proud of your property. Many municipalities don't own street sweepers or lack the funds to rent one on a regular basis. Have you ever seen someone sweeping the sidewalk or cleaning the gutter in front of their home? Every shovelful of dirt that does not flow into the drain does not flow into the river and does not flow into the Chesapeake Bay. The same applies to dog feces.

Many small things add up to large impacts. Most victories are the result of a team effort. Your contribution, no matter how insignificant it may seem, will make a positive difference!