

PET WASTE AND WATER QUALITY

How Can Pet Owners Help Protect Our Water?

Is Your Pet Polluting Our Water?

Pollution from pet waste provides a very serious threat to our environment. Although it is not the most noticeable form of pollution, animal waste left on the ground can be washed into storm drains from rain and melting snow and ice. Once it has been washed into storm drains, the waste flows to rivers, lakes, oceans and even drinking water. With its high concentrations of bacteria and disease causing microorganisms, animal waste poses a serious pollution threat to everyone within the community.

To help protect our community from animal waste contamination everyone who walks a pet should properly dispose of waste by picking it up, wrapping it, and either placing it into the trash or flushing it **UNWRAPPED** down the toilet.

According to the City of Rockford's Code of Ordinances, pet owners are required to properly and immediately dispose of any pet waste deposited on any public or private property not owned or possessed by that person.

Did You Know?

When pet waste is washed into lakes, streams, or rivers, the waste decays, using up oxygen and releasing ammonia. Low oxygen levels and ammonia, combined with warm water temperatures, can kill fish and other aquatic life.

Pet waste also contains nutrients that encourage algae and weed growth. Nutrient loaded waters can become cloudy, green and unattractive for swimming, boating and fishing.

Pet waste also carries diseases and bacteria, which are unsafe for humans. These diseases include:

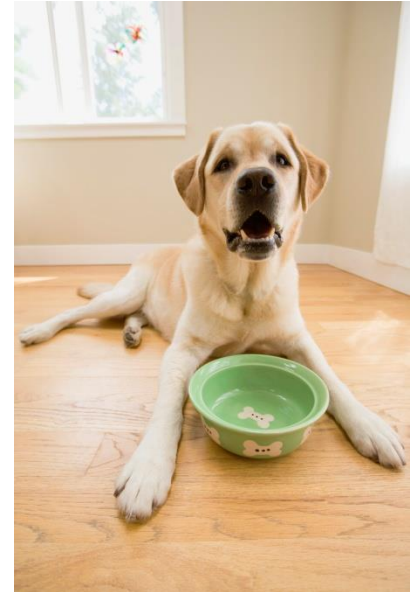
- Salmonellosis – the most common bacterial infection transmitted from animals to humans. Symptoms include headaches, fever, muscle aches, vomiting and diarrhea.
- Campylobacteriosis – a bacterial infection which includes diarrhea in humans.
- Coliform Bacteria - a single gram of canine feces contains more than 20 million coliform bacteria. Symptoms can include: diarrhea, cramps and kidney issues in humans.

When it rains, bacteria from animal waste can wash directly into storm drains and drainage ditches and eventually into our waterways.

Cleaning Up After Your Pet

There are many things contributing to water pollution. Pet waste is one that can be easily prevented. Below are simple ways to dispose of pet waste:

- Always clean up after your pet.
- Use a scooper, bag or shovel to pick up pet waste. Place waste in a bag and seal it before placing it in the trash.
- Waste from cats should also be contained. Provide covered litter boxes for outdoor cats and dispose of cat litter properly. **DO NOT** flush kitty litter down the toilet.
- **DO NOT** compost or dump pet waste into storm drains or ditches.
- **DO NOT** leave pet waste on the street, sidewalk or any other hard surfaces where it can wash into storm drains, ditches or waterways.
- If you are flushing dog waste down a toilet, remove the wrappings first. **DO NOT** flush wrappings down the toilet.



Consider This.....

According to the American Veterinary Medicine Association (AVMA), there are approximately 34,000 dogs in Rockford.

A dog drops an average of $\frac{3}{4}$ pounds of waste daily. That means approximately 25,500 pounds of dog waste is generated in Rockford each day!

Cleaning Up After Your Pet Is Easy

1. **Bring a bag.**
2. **Clean it up.**
3. **Properly Dispose of it.**



Why Care About Clean Water?

Storm water pollution is one of the greatest threats to Rockford's creeks and rivers. Clean water means safe drinking water, places for recreation, commercial opportunities, healthy wildlife habitats, and adds beauty to the landscape. Rain washes pollution from streets, parking lots and lawns into storm sewers and drainage ditches then directly to our streams, rivers and ultimately, the ocean.

City of Rockford
Department of Public Works
Engineering Division
425 East State Street
Rockford, Illinois 61104
Phone: 779-348-7175
Fax: 815-967-6942
www.rockfordil.gov

For More Information about the City of Rockford's Storm Water Programs go to:

<https://rockfordil.gov/city-departments/public-works/engineering-division/stormwater-environmental-team/>



February 2016