

## Questions?

For more information about the FIU stormwater management program contact the department of Environmental Health and Safety at 305-248-2621  
Information cited from Southwest Florida Water Management District



Modesto Maidique Campus  
Campus Support Complex, Suite  
146  
11200 SW 8th Street  
Miami, FL 33199  
Phone: 305-348-2621  
Fax: 305-348-3574  
Website: <http://ehs.fiu.edu>

### Why is Stormwater Runoff Important?

Stormwater becomes a problem when it picks up debris, chemicals, dirt and other pollutants as it flows or when it causes flooding and erosion of stream banks. Stormwater eventually flows directly to a lake, river stream, wetland or coastal water. All of the pollutants storm water carries along the way empty into our waters.



### Stormwater Management Program



**Save water, it will  
save you later!**

# What is Stormwater?



Stormwater is water from precipitation that flows across the ground and pavement when it rains. The water seeps into the ground or drains into what we call storm sewers. These are the drains you see at street corners or at low points on the sides of streets.

Collectively, the draining water is called storm water runoff. Stormwater becomes a problem when it picks up debris, chemicals, dirt, and other pollutants as it flows or when it causes flooding and erosion of stream banks. Stormwater travels through a system of pipes and roadside ditches that make up storm sewer systems.

It eventually flows directly to a lake, river, stream, wetland, or coastal water. All of the pollutants storm water carries along the way empty into our waters, too, because storm water does not get treated!

## STORMWATER FACTS

One of the most common pollutants found in storm drains and creeks is detergent from the washing of cars.

## HOW CAN ILLICIT DISCHARGE BE A PROBLEM?

An illicit discharge is any discharge to a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems that is not composed entirely of stormwater. The consequences of illicit discharge include excess nutrients carried in stormwater runoff which affect our water supply.

These nutrients, primarily nitrogen and phosphorus, can come from lawn fertilizers or natural sources, such as manure. Nutrients can cause algal and bacterial blooms, which proliferate (reproduce) rapidly. Algae will consume oxygen, and increase turbidity in the water body and eventually die along with the fish and other aquatic life that need oxygen to live.

Pathogenic (capable of causing disease, especially in humans) bacteria and other pathogenic microorganisms can be carried by storm water into a water body. This creates health hazards and can cause lakes and beaches to close.



## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

Rain by nature is important for replenishing drinking water supplies, recreation, and healthy wildlife habitats. It only becomes a problem when pollutants from our activities like car maintenance, lawn care, and dog walking are left on the ground for rain to wash away. Here are some of the most important ways to prevent illicit discharge :

- Properly dispose of hazardous substances such as oil, cleaning supplies and paint-never pour them down any part of the storm sewer system and report anyone who does.
- Use pesticides, fertilizers, and herbicides properly and efficiently to prevent excess runoff.
- Install innovative storm water practices on residential property, such as rain barrels or rain gardens, that capture stormwater and keep it on site instead of letting it drain away into the storm sewer system.
- Store materials that could pollute stormwater indoors and use containers for outdoor storage that do not rust or leak to eliminate exposure of materials to stormwater.

