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## **2023 Stormwater Management: Keeping our water supply safe from everyday pollutants**

Dear Residents:

We all want clean, safe water. That means we share the responsibility for keeping common pollutants out of our stormwater. When you and I properly control the ways in which we use and dispose of contaminants, we're helping to keep our water clean and lower taxpayer costs for cleaning our water.

Some types of pollution are easy to spot: used water bottles, food wrappers or refuse, cardboard or paper packaging. These find their way into our lakes and streams and can taint our drinking water.

Sometimes, however, it can be difficult to recognize potential routine stormwater contaminants when we use or see them. Things like fertilizers, oils, pesticides, detergents, grass clippings, and pet waste are all contaminants. They remain on our lawns or streets until there's a significant rainfall and they wash away, only to end up in our storm sewers and water supply.

Stormwater pollution is one of New Jersey's greatest threats to clean and plentiful water. We can decrease that threat if we all do our part to keep commonplace pollution from being carried away by our stormwater collection system.

To help keep our water clean and safe, and to meet state and federal requirements, Livingston has adopted several ordinances to help prevent everyday stormwater pollution. Following these will result in cleaner water for everyone. Here are a few easy, common-sense steps we can all take:

### **Dispose of yard waste properly**

In addition to polluting the water, yard waste like grass clippings, brush, branches, or plants can create blockages to your neighborhood's storm sewer system, which can lead to flooding.

### **Keep leaves, solid items and everything else out of storm drain inlets**

Find the storm drains near your property and make sure they and the areas around them are clear of leaves and debris. Besides decomposing and potentially contaminating the water supply, rain and other accumulated surface water can cause roads or homes to flood when storm drains are blocked.

### **Apply fertilizers properly and only when necessary**

Fertilizer chemicals can contaminate drinking water and can kill fish, wildlife, and plants. If fertilizers or pesticides are improperly applied, they can wash off and end up in storm drains that lead directly into waterways. Our ordinances prohibit applying fertilizer when the soil is saturated or when a rainstorm is predicted.

### **Clean up after your pet**

Always clean up after your pet, and keep harmful bacteria out of our water by properly disposing of pet waste in the trash or toilet.

### **Keep our wildlife wild**

We love our local wildlife! Unfortunately, feeding wild animals teaches them to be dependent on humans rather than on their natural instincts and abilities. Doing so also attracts more animals, which leads to more animal waste and offers the potential for larger animals to prey on smaller

ones. The results are concentrated, harmful levels of bacteria getting into our waterways. Believe it or not, waste from wildlife can be a significant source of unperceived everyday pollution.

### **Control erosion and surface water runoff**

Soil erosion can occur wherever soil is disturbed or surface water is discharged. When eroded, soil quality is reduced, and the soil can wash into the storm sewer system and waterways, causing water pollution. Doing something as simple as adding mulch or rocks can help prevent erosion and runoff.

### **Reduce, Reuse, Recycle**

Bags, boxes, and containers can have second lives. Help reduce the amount of material that ends up in our landfills in addition to reducing the litter that could end up in our waterways.

### **Don't litter**

Litter ends up in our water — whether through stormwater runoff, wind, or by other means. When we dispose of things properly and pick up litter that we see, we help keep our water clean.

### **Don't put anything other than stormwater into the storm sewer system**

Storm drains are not slop sinks or garbage dumps. They are not equipped to handle toxic substances like paint, cleaning solutions, or other pollutants — that's what home drains and slop sinks are for.

Anything other than stormwater that's dumped or spilled into the storm sewer system may contain pollutants that could contaminate our water. In addition, unnecessary discharges can reduce the effectiveness of the system.

For information on stormwater-related topics, visit [cleanwater.nj.org](http://cleanwater.nj.org) or [livingstonnj.org/Stormwater](http://livingstonnj.org/Stormwater). More information is available at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Website: [epa.gov/npdes/stormwater](http://epa.gov/npdes/stormwater). You may also contact the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Bureau of Nonpoint Pollution Control at 609-633-7021.

### **If you suspect a problem, report it.**

Please don't assume that someone else is aware of a stormwater-related problem that you've noticed. When you report a potential problem right away, you lessen the amount of time it takes to remedy that problem.

- For non-immediate issues, visit [livingstonnj.org/ReportAConcern](http://livingstonnj.org/ReportAConcern) (or click the "Report A Concern" icon on the website homepage) and send us a request for service.
- For immediate issues — for example, seeing someone in the process of dumping garbage in a brook or wastewater into a storm drain — call the Police Department at 973-992-3000.

Thank you for helping keep our water clean by reducing everyday pollution in Livingston's stormwater. The steps we take now will benefit us, our children, our grandchildren, and future generations.

Yours truly,

Michael M. Vieira, Mayor  
Township of Livingston