WHAT CAN I DO TO PREVENT STORMWATER POLLUTION?

Everyone can help keep the City of Bellflower clean. Here are a few tips that can help protect our environment.

• Don’t put anything in storm drains but rainwater. Storm drains and flood control channels carry surface runoff directly to the rivers and ocean without treatment. Make sure that runoff carries only rainwater.

• Avoid throwing litter into the street. Trash-laden gutters increase neighborhood pollution and clog storm drains causing street flooding and more traffic congestion.

• Pick up after your pet. Animal waste, when left on the ground, washes down storm drains and contaminates beaches. Picking up dog waste is a City ordinance and dog owners disregarding this law may be fined.

• Recycle your motor oil. There are auto parts stores and repair shops that will collect and recycle used motor oil in the City and many more throughout the County of Los Angeles.

• Bag, compost or recycle grass, tree limbs, leaves and other yard waste. Soggy yard waste is a major contributor to clogged storm drains and street and neighborhood flooding.

• Use yard waste as mulch, as natural fertilizer, or as ground cover. Nearly 20 percent of the waste buried in landfills is from our yards like grass and tree trimmings.

For more information, please contact:
City of Bellflower
Department of Public Works
16600 Civic Center Drive
Phone: 562-804-1424, ext. 2233
www.bellflower.org
WHAT IS STORMWATER POLLUTION?

Storm drains are intended to take rainwater straight to the ocean to avoid area flooding. Rainwater or even runoff from sprinklers or hoses carries contaminants such as litter, animal waste, automobile fluids, fertilizers and pesticides into the storm drains and pollutes the City’s neighborhoods and waters, creating health risks for children, killing marine life and contributing to localized flooding and beach closures.

WHERE DOES THE POLLUTION COME FROM?

We all contribute to stormwater pollution every day. Dropping cigarette butts on the ground, allowing paper or trash to blow into the street, and hosing leaves or dirt into the street are just a few examples of things you might be doing that contribute to stormwater pollution. Waters that flow over streets, parking lots, construction sites and industrial facilities carry these pollutants through a storm drain network (consisting of 200 miles of curb line, approximately 550 City and County catch basins, and 34,200 linear feet of in-ground pipe) directly to the channels, rivers and beaches of Southern California.

ISN’T STORMWATER TREATED BEFORE GOING INTO THE OCEAN, LIKE SEWER WATER?

No! The storm drain system is separate from the sewage system. Storm drains are intended to take rainwater straight to the ocean to avoid area flooding. Storm drain water is not treated before flowing directly into rivers and the ocean, making it everyone’s responsibility to make sure storm drains and waterways are free of pollutants.

HOW DOES STORMWATER POLLUTION AFFECT MY COMMUNITY?

Stormwater pollution can also have serious impacts on your neighborhood. Litter and animal waste in the streets and storm drains makes any neighborhood look bad and can contribute to flooded streets during the rainy season. We also see the impacts of pollution in increased health risks to swimmers near storm drains, high concentrations of toxic metals in harbor and ocean sediments, and toxicity to aquatic life. These impacts translate into loss of recreational resources, dramatic cost increases for cleaning up contaminated sediments and impaired function and vitality of our natural resources. Clogged storm drains can lead to area flooding when it rains, creating traffic problems and unsanitary conditions. Pollutants in the community such as pet waste, litter and hazardous contaminants significantly degrade the appearance of the neighborhood and can lower property values.