

City of Coffeyville
Stormwater Information

**City to Increase Enforcement
of Littering Ordinance**

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has established new regulations to regulate run-off of pollutants from urban areas to the environment, including lakes and rivers. The rule requires the City of Coffeyville to take actions to reduce or eliminate pollution of rivers and streams to the maximum extent practical. As required by the rule, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) issued a permit to the City of Coffeyville, to allow discharge from our stormwater collection system into the Verdigris River and Sycamore Creek. With certain exceptions, the permit prohibits any discharge other than rainwater to the stormwater system.

Question: What is stormwater pollution, and why is it important? **A**nswer: As stormwater flows over driveways, lawns, and sidewalks, it picks up debris, chemicals, dirt, and other pollutants. Stormwater can flow into a storm sewer system or directly to a lake, stream or river. Anything that enters a storm sewer system is discharged UNTREATED into the water bodies we use for swimming, fishing, and providing drinking water. Polluted runoff is the nation's greatest threat to clean water.

Question: What can I do? **A**nswer: By practicing healthy household habits, homeowners can keep common pollutants like pesticides, pet waste, grass clippings, and automotive fluids out of the stormwater system, and out of local lakes, streams, and rivers. Never dump anything into streets, gutters, ditches, or storm drain inlets. These structures drain directly, UNTREATED to our creeks and the river. The only substance allowed into these structures is rain water. This illegal dumping includes hosing dirt, oil, and other fluids from paved areas, such as your driveway, into the street. Another illegal activity that is a major contributor to storm water pollution is blowing leaves or grass into the streets.

Question: What's wrong with blowing leaves and grass into the street? **A**nswer: It can lead to pot-holes, increased taxes, flooding, and death of aquatic life. In addition, it is against the law to do so.

Question: What? Can you explain that statement? **A**nswer: The practice of blowing leaves and grass into the street is, and has for many years been, prohibited by City Ordinance as a form of littering, punishable by fines or even jail. Besides the fact that blowing the grass and leaves from your lawnmower into the street makes your neighborhood and the town look bad, it also contributes to stormwater pollution and many other serious problems. When the grass collects in the gutter it catches dirt run-off from the yards that drain to that street. As the dirt builds up in the gutter with the grass, it catches more and more dirt and debris, blocking the flow of water in the gutter and causing standing water problems. The standing water is a breeding ground for disease carrying mosquitoes, and the water eventually works its way through and under the street asphalt. The water then deteriorates the asphalt and a pot-hole develops, right in front of your house, which you, of course, want repaired. Pot-hole repair costs tax dollars. Any grass or leaves that actually make it into the storm drain can cause a blockage in the inlet box or pipes, which prevents the water from draining during and after a heavy rain, causing street flooding. Any grass and leaves that actually make it all the way to the creek or river become nutrients (food) for algae. When the algae dies, it settles to the bottom of the stream and decomposes in a process which uses up all the oxygen in the water, killing the fish, plants, and other aquatic life.

Question: What is the City going to do about this terrible problem? **A**nswer: The City will be increasing enforcement of the littering ordinance, and will be issuing citations and fines for violation of the ordinance.

Question: What if I hire someone to mow my lawn? **A**nswer: Any person responsible for blowing the grass into the street may be cited for violation of the ordinance. If you hire a person or business to mow your lawn, make sure that they know that you will not allow them to blow your grass into the street and leave it there. That way you and the person mowing your lawn will avoid a possible fine, and your property will look better without the grass, dirt, and standing water in the street and gutter in front of your house, not to mention the possible pot-holes!

Only pure rain water should leave your property and enter the streets, gutters, and storm drain inlets.

Remember: Only rain down the drain!

Storm drains connect to water bodies!