



PRESS RELEASE

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KEEPING UP WITH STORMWATER REGULATIONS

Stormwater, the runoff water from rain and snowmelt, is one of the most difficult sources of water pollution to control. Stormwater picks up pollutants from developed land and carries these pollutants to our streams, ponds, wetlands, and the ocean. Stormwater pollutants include litter, sand, bacteria, and chemicals such as fertilizer and herbicides from lawns and oil and gas from cars.

Runoff from paved or impervious surfaces, such as roads, parking lots, driveways and rooftops, can contribute large amounts of polluted stormwater. To prevent flooding, parking lots and streets are often lined with storm drains to quickly move stormwater off the pavement. Storm drains have underground pipes that channel the stormwater directly to a nearby water body, usually with little or no treatment.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) began regulating stormwater in 1990 under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit program. Stormwater Phase I targeted large urban areas with populations of 100,000 or greater, which included Boston and Worcester. Stormwater Phase II compliance began in 2003 for urban areas with populations of less than 100,000.

242 of the 351 municipalities in Massachusetts, as well as many public agencies, are now covered under Stormwater Phase I or II. Regulated municipalities are required to implement a Stormwater Management Program by 2008 that addresses the following six “minimum control measures”:

- 1) Public Education and Outreach
- 2) Public Involvement and Participation
- 3) Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination
- 4) Construction Site Runoff Control
- 5) Post-Construction Runoff Control
- 6) Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping for Municipal Operations.

“I believe EPA’s Stormwater Program has helped many municipalities focus attention on its often long neglected stormwater infrastructure,” says David Gray, Environmental Engineer with EPA’s Stormwater Program. “Residents play an essential role in supporting their municipality’s stormwater management program by choosing daily behaviors that reduce or eliminate pollution

or other problems at the source, thus avoiding more costly or difficult maintenance or remediation of the stormwater system or receiving waters. By complying with EPA's stormwater regulations, a municipality can experience economic benefits from a decrease in flooding and erosion problems, and a reduction in the degradation of its water resources."

In compliance with the Stormwater Phase II program, **Sudbury** performs many activities that are critical to keeping stormwater clean. Street sweepers pick up sand and winter debris from the streets so that it won't be washed into storm drains. Storm drains have catch basins, some with sumps to trap heavy particles and hoods to trap oils, that must be cleaned out regularly by the public works department to keep the storm drains clear.

Keeping stormwater clean and complying with the Stormwater Phase II regulations is a community-wide effort. Residents can help by properly caring for their lawns and cars, not littering, never putting anything down storm drains, and taking part in local "Stormwater Matters" outreach and education activities.

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