

Help Prevent Stormwater Pollution This Winter

Winter snow often puts a pristine white coat over every surface that makes for beautiful photos and lots of family fun. However, just like when rain falls the rest of the year, melting snow turns into stormwater runoff. It is not long after the sun comes out and starts melting the snow, that concerns emerge. Even a small amount can cause localized flooding on your property, when it builds up over several small storm events without melting in between. When it finally does melt, runoff can lead to potential community wide flooding events. In both cases, that standing and flowing water on the ground is picking up all kinds of debris, pollutants, and litter that will find its way into nearby streams.

When shoveling/plowing snow this season, pay attention to where you place it:

Do:

- Pile snow in locations with the most opportunity to infiltrate into the ground.
- Pile snow in areas where water does not pond.
- Clear away any snow that may have been thrown onto the storm drains
- Clear your downspouts to allow melting roof snow to flow and not collect at your foundation.
- Pay special attention to places that are eroding during snow melt, make a plan to improve these areas in spring, using plants that can slow and stop erosion, such as native grasses and meadow plants or native trees and shrubs.

Don't:

- Do not pile snow on top of storm drains or near water bodies and wetlands.
- Do not pile snow onto rain gardens or bio retention areas.
- Do not overuse de-icing chemicals and salts and avoid spreading around sensitive areas like waterways.

Also remember- *more salt does not equal more melting snow*. Follow product instructions when spreading deicing material and give it time to work. Sweep up any material remaining after the snow/ice melts to help reduce pollution.