

Education is a powerful tool that can produce in real solutions for poor environmental conditions and water quality problems. Increasing environmental stewardship through education and outreach involves enlightening the general public about the connection between human activities such as yard maintenance or car care and the health of our local waters.

Three important pollution prevention goals:

1. Know the difference between a storm drain and a sanitary sewer. Confusing the two can cause damage to our streams and living things that depend on them for habitat and recreation. An early start in the elementary schools is important to educate children about the difference between drainage and wastewater systems and the proper way to use them for a cleaner environment.
2. Identify potential residential pollutant sources and take individual action in and around the home.
3. Spread the word to family members, neighbors and friends about what not to allow on the street where runoff eventually drains to streams and the ocean and what not to dump down plumbing pipes that lead to the wastewater system.

Don't Be A Pain In The Drain

On Oahu, many residents on Oahu may not be aware of the relationship between the municipal sewer system and the storm drain-flood control system. While these systems are separate, in heavy rains runoff can affect the sewer with negative consequences.

Grease, roots, broken pipes and inappropriate objects flushed down the drain contribute to flow restrictions and blockages in the sewer system.

All of these problems are magnified when storm water runoff gets into the sewer system through illegal sewer connections and overloads the carrying capacity of the sewer lines.

An overloaded sewer line will spill out of the lowest nearby point. Wastewater can run from manholes or even private homes, out into the street, into storm drains and streambeds that flow to the ocean causing beach closures.

It is important to keep fats, oils and grease from going down the drain, as well as plastic, cardboard, dental floss, hair, cotton swabs or food wrappers. Only toilet paper, which breaks down in the sewer, is appropriate for flushing down the drain.



Sewer line clogged with accumulated grease.

