



Key Stormwater Definitions

Best Management Practices (BMPs): Activities or structural improvements that help reduce the quantity and improve the quality of stormwater runoff. BMPs include treatment requirements, operating procedures and practices to control site runoff, spillage or leaks, sludge or waste disposal, or drainage from raw material storage.

Erosion: Removal of soil particles by wind and water. Often the eroded debris (silt or sediment) becomes a pollutant via stormwater runoff. Erosion occurs naturally but can be intensified by human activities such as farming, development, road-building, and timber harvesting.

Green Infrastructure: A strategically planned network of natural and semi-natural areas with other environmental features designed and managed to deliver a wide range of ecosystem services.

Ground water: Water that flows below the ground surface through saturated soil, glacial deposits, or rock.

Household hazardous materials: Common everyday products that people use in and around their homes-including paint, paint thinner, herbicides, and pesticides-that, due to their chemical nature, can be hazardous if not properly disposed of.

Impervious Surface or Cover: The characteristic of a material which prevents the infiltration or passage of liquid through it. This may apply to roads, streets, parking lots, rooftops and sidewalks.

Litter: Litter is any solid waste object (disposable item or resource) that can be held or carried in a person's hand that is left behind or placed in an inappropriate location. Any such material or item disposed of in an inappropriate manner is to be regarded as litter - the end outcome of an environmentally undesirable disposal action.

Non-Point Source Pollution: Pollutants from many diffuse sources. Non-point source pollution is caused by rainfall or snowmelt moving over and through the ground. As the runoff moves, it picks up and carries away natural and human-made pollutants, finally depositing them into lakes, rivers, wetlands, coastal waters, and even underground sources of drinking water.

Point Source Pollution: Pollutants from a single, identifiable source such as a factory or refinery; also called single-point-source pollution. Most of this pollution is highly regulated at the state and local levels.

Pollutants: A contaminant existing at a concentration high enough to endanger the environment or the public health or to be otherwise objectionable.

Stormwater pollution: Water from rain, irrigation, garden hoses or other activities that picks up pollutants (cigarette butts, trash, automotive fluids, used oil, paint, fertilizers and pesticides, lawn and garden clippings and pet waste) from streets, parking lots, driveways and yards and carries them through the storm drain system and straight to the ocean. Also included are oils, grease and metals.

Runoff: That portion of the precipitation on a drainage area that is discharged from the area in the stream channels. Types include surface runoff, ground water runoff or seepage. Drainage or flood discharge that leaves an area as surface flow or as pipeline flow.

Sediment: Solid material, both mineral and organic, that is being transported or has been moved from its site of origin by air, water, gravity, or ice and has come to rest on the earth's surface either above or below sea level. Soil, sand, and minerals washed from land into water, usually after rain. Sediment can destroy fish-nesting areas, clog animal habitats, and cloud waters so that sunlight does not reach aquatic plants.

Storm drain: An opening leading to an underground pipe or open ditch for carrying surface runoff, separate from the sanitary sewer or wastewater system.

Stormwater: Precipitation that accumulates in natural and/or constructed storage and stormwater systems during and immediately following a storm event.

Thermal Stress: Stress caused by differences in temperature or by differences in thermal expansion.

Watershed: Geographical area that drains to a specified point on a water course, usually a confluence of streams or rivers, can also be known as drainage area, catchments, or a river basin.

Wetland: An area that is inundated or saturated with surface water or groundwater at a frequency, duration, and depth sufficient to support a predominance of emergent plant species adapted to growth in saturated soil conditions.

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