

Pointless Personal

Pollution



Well-known stories about environmental problems tend to focus on big, recognizable targets such as smoking industrial facilities, leaking toxic waste dumps and messy oil spills. As a result, people tend to forget about water pollution caused by smaller non-point sources. This is especially true of pollution at the household level known as pointless personal pollution. Although an individual home may contribute only minor amounts of pollution, the combined effect of that pollution from all households in the community is the leading source of water quality degradation in the U.S.

As with many Florida communities, the lakes in Altamonte Springs receive a large amount of stormwater runoff. Stormwater that does not evaporate or seep into the ground, flows off streets and property into the stormwater systems often discharging into our lakes carrying with it leaves, debris and pollutants. The City's lakes are a fundamental component of the area's ecological integrity, and have a significant impact on property values, as well as the quality of life in our community.

The City of Altamonte Springs always strives to protect and improve water quality by decreasing the amount of pollutants and sediments entering the stormwater system so everyone can enjoy the natural environment around us. But we can't do this alone, we need your help. Here are steps to reduce pointless personal pollution coming from your home and neighborhood:

- Never dump anything down storm drains! Blowing or dumping grass clippings and leaves into the street and/or storm drains can add to flooding problems and the pollution of lakes and streams. It is considered an "illicit discharge" and is subject to code enforcement. Property owners should collect leaves from yards and place them in containers or bags for regular pick up or go green and compost yard waste.
- Advise your lawn maintenance companies not to blow leaves into curb lines or streets.



Pollution at the household level is known as pointless personal pollution.

- Use fertilizers and pesticides sparingly and sweep up driveways, sidewalks and roads.
- If you apply fertilizer or pesticides to your lawn, follow the application instructions and avoid fertilizing when rain is forecast. The City's reclaimed water contains many of the same nutrients as fertilizer, so you should reduce fertilizer application by at least half of the recommended dosage.
- Drain pool or backwash water and direct downspouts into the lawn or landscape areas and away from paved surfaces.
- Store and dispose of household chemicals properly and use them as intended. Keep them sealed to prevent leaks and to preserve for later use. Take hazardous waste to a proper disposal site. For disposal locations, call (407) 665-2260 or visit www.seminolecountyfl.gov.
- Vegetate bare spots in your yard to prevent sediment erosion.
- Wash your car in the grass and not the driveway or better yet, take it to the car wash.
- Check your car for leaks and recycle motor oil.
- Pick up after your pet! Pet waste contains fecal coliform bacteria that is harmful to water bodies and restricts recreational activities if the levels get too high.

To report an illicit discharge or if your storm drain does not have a stencil that reads "No Dumping Leads to Waterways," contact April Verpoorten at (407) 571-8331 or AVerpoorten@altamonte.org.

For more information on ways to reduce your pointless personal pollution, visit these websites:

- *Seminole County Watershed Atlas*
www.seminole.wateratlas.usf.edu
- *Environmental Protection Agency*
<http://water.epa.gov>
- *Think About Personal Pollution*
<http://tappwater.org/>