Pet Waste and Water Quality

KEEP THE STORM DRAINS CLEAN FOR THOSE DOWNSTREAM

Pet waste left to decay on the street or grass, or waste washed into storm drains, is a threat to water quality and public health.

Pollutants from animal wastes can be washed into streams and storm drains during rain or snowmelt. Storm drains around your housing area and elsewhere on the installation usually discharge directly into streams, ponds, or rivers. Are you cleaning up after your pet?

How Do You Dispose of Your Pet's Waste?

Pet waste left to decay on the street or grass, or waste washed into storm drains, is a threat to water quality and public health. When pet waste enters a stream with storm water runoff, it consumes oxygen upon decay. The oxygen reduction can harm aquatic life and adversely affect overall stream health. Pet waste also contains nutrients that encourage weed and algae growth. In addition, pet waste may carry infectious organisms, bacteria, and other pathogens that can make streams and ponds unsafe for recreation.

Are You Risking Your Health?

Improper disposal of pet waste is not just a water quality issue. Pets, children who play outside, and adults who garden risk infection from the bacteria and parasites found in pet waste. Fortunately, there are some simple things you can do to help keep the installation and our streams clean and healthy.

You Can Make a Difference!

Cleaning up after your pet can be as simple as taking a plastic bag or paper cup along on your next walk. But what should you do with the waste you collect? Here are some tips for proper disposal:

Flush it down the toilet.

The water from your toilet goes to a wastewater treatment facility. Special processes there can remove animal waste prior to discharging the water to a stream, pond, or river. Remember to prevent plumbing problems by not flushing rocks, sticks, or kitty litter down the toilet. Cat feces may be scooped out and flushed down the toilet, but used litter should be put in a closed bag for disposal as household garbage.

Bury it in the yard.

Dig a hole or trench that is about 5 inches deep, and away from vegetable gardens, ponds, streams, rivers, ditches or wells. Fully cover the waste with soil. When the waste begins to decay, valuable nutrients are released as fertilizer for nearby plants.

Put it in the trash.

Bag the waste and place the closed bags in the trash.

Around Your Home:

For yard pet waste, be sure to clean up areas near wells, drainage ditches, waterways, and storm drains. Promptly remove pet waste from areas where children play. To prevent possible contamination, thoroughly wash hands with soap and water after any contact with pet waste.

Contact the Fort Hood Environmental Division, (254) 287-6499.

Improving Storm Water Quality