



SPRING CLEANING

with water quality in mind

After a long winter, it feels great to get outside. As you begin your outdoor spring cleaning, keep these tips in mind to protect your neighborhood ponds, lakes and streams.



Sweep Up Salt Residue

If you used ice melting products this winter, there may be some leftovers on your driveway, patio or sidewalk. Don't grab a hose to wash it off – use a broom to sweep it up and toss it in the trash. Not only will you protect your lawn, shrubs and other plantings from salt exposure, but you'll also stop the residue from ending up in local waterways.



Wash Your Vehicle at a Commercial Car Wash

Winter leaves your vehicle coated in dirt, road salt and other grime. But if you wash your car in the driveway, you're likely sending the sludge and soapy suds into the nearest waterbody. Visit a commercial car wash instead, where they capture the dirty water and send it to a treatment plant. Or if you wash your car at home, do it in an area where the water will soak into the ground, and dump your bucket of leftover soapy water down your sink.



Clean Your Gutters and Redirect Downspouts

Your gutters and downspouts are hard at work keeping water away from your home's foundation. But where are your downspouts directing that water? If it's flowing onto your driveway or across your yard and into the street, it's likely picking up pollution as it heads toward the nearest waterbody. When you clean your gutters this spring, consider adjusting your downspout so it directs water away from paved surfaces. A downspout extension is an inexpensive option to funnel water to an ideal spot away from your home.



Pick Up Pet Waste – Before It Rains

As it rains, the number of harmful bacteria such as E. coli tends to rise dramatically in lakes, rivers and other waterbodies. A good portion of this bacteria comes from dog waste. The only way to avoid this is to pick up after your pet and dispose of it properly. Keep a scoop or bags handy at home and make it a habit to carry dog waste bags whenever you leave home with your dog. Not only will you protect waterbodies, but you'll prevent the unpleasant surprise of you or someone else stepping in your dog's waste.