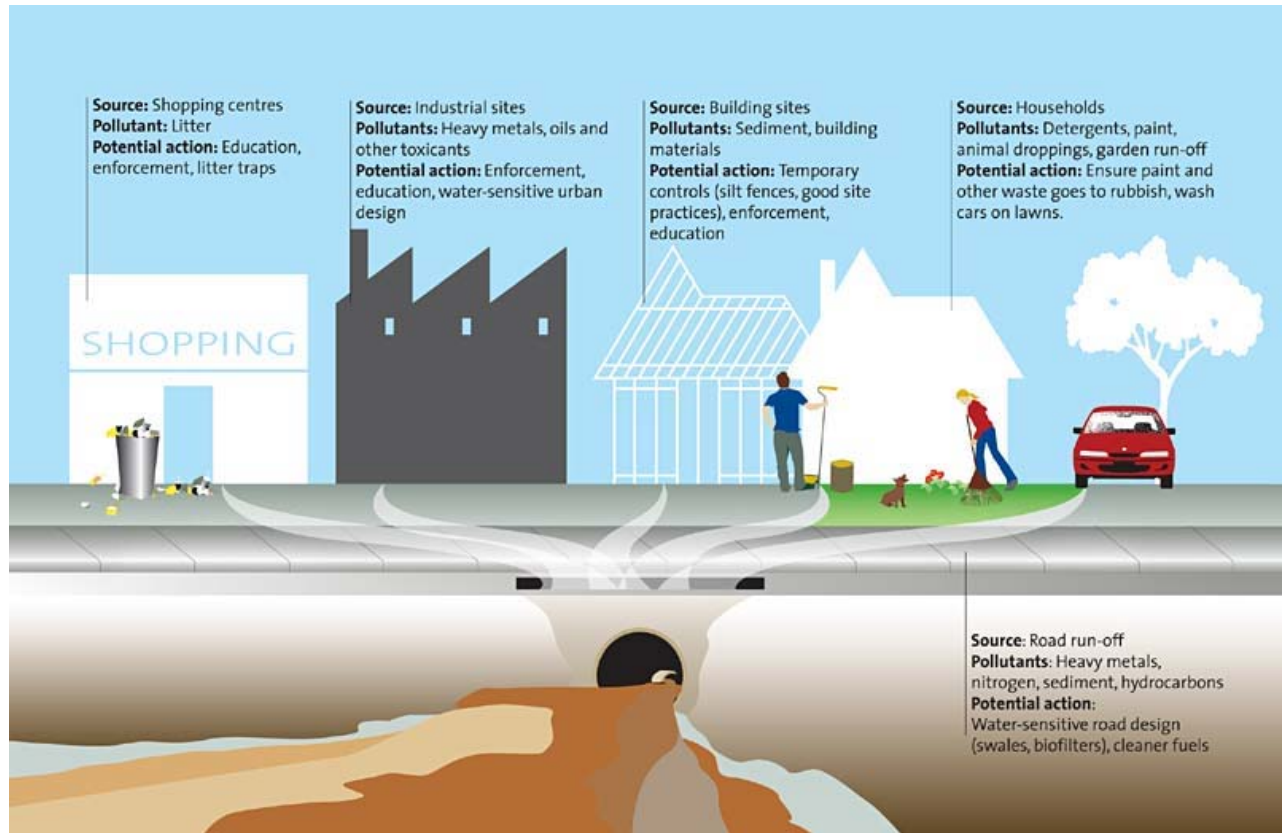


# Stormwater FAQs



## What is stormwater runoff?

Stormwater runoff is water from rain or melting snow that “runs off” across the land instead of seeping into the ground. This runoff usually flows into the nearest stream, creek, river, or lake. The runoff is not treated in any way.

## What is polluted runoff?

Water from rain and melting snow either seeps into the ground or “runs off” to lower areas, making its way into streams, lakes and other water bodies. On its way, runoff water can pick up and carry many substances that pollute water. Some pollutants, such as pesticides, fertilizers, oil and soap are harmful in any quantity. Others, such as sediment from construction, bare soil, agricultural land, pet waste, grass clippings and leaves can harm creeks, rivers and lakes in sufficient quantities.

In addition to rain and snowmelt, various human activities like watering, car washing, and malfunctioning septic tanks can also put water onto the land surface and carry pollutants to water bodies. Polluted runoff generally happens anywhere people use or alter the land. For example, in developed areas, none of the water that falls on hard surfaces like roofs, driveways, parking lots or roads can seep into the ground. These impervious surfaces create large amounts of runoff that picks up pollutants. The runoff flows from gutters and storm drains to water bodies. Runoff not only pollutes, but erodes stream banks. The mix of pollution and eroded dirt muddies the water and causes problems downstream.

## What causes polluted stormwater runoff?

Polluted stormwater runoff generally happens anywhere people use or alter the land. People going about their daily lives are the number one source of stormwater pollutants. Most people are unaware of how they impact water quality. Some common examples include over fertilizing lawns, excessive pesticide use, not picking up pet waste, using salt or fertilizer to de-ice driveways, letting oil drip out of their vehicles and littering. Developed areas in general, with their increased runoff, concentrated numbers of people and animals, construction and other activities, are a major contributor to NPS pollution, as are agricultural activities.