

# THE REAL SCOOP

ABOUT YOUR PET'S POOP

EVERY PET OWNER'S RESPONSIBILITIES  
IN PREVENTING STORMWATER POLLUTION



A PET OWNERS' GUIDE TO  
PROTECTING HAVERHILL'S WATERBODIES

# Don't let pet waste pollute the Merrimack River and other local waters

When left on the ground, rain or melting snow can wash pet waste into our storm drain system.



Unlike sanitary sewers, storm drains are not connected to a treatment plant, so any pet waste that washes into a storm drain will flow directly into our ponds, lakes, wetlands, streams and rivers. Pet waste runoff includes bacteria and parasites that threaten the health of both people and wild-life, as well as create an overly rich nutrient environment, causing excess weed and algae growth.

A clean and healthy environment is invaluable to the well-being and beauty of our community. Simple precautions can protect and preserve our streams, ponds, lakes, wetlands and rivers.



# PET OWNER'S ROLE IN PREVENTING WATER POLLUTION

## HOW EVERY PET OWNER CAN HELP PROTECT HAVERHILL'S WATERBODIES

### Pet Waste Facts

- Waste dumped or washed into stormwater drains is carried directly to the river or other nearby waterbody.
- Pet waste significantly contributes to pollutants in the Merrimack River and other local waters.
- Pet waste can carry viruses and bacteria that are extremely harmful to humans.
- Pet waste contains nitrogen and phosphorus, nutrients that accelerate growth of damaging algae and aquatic weeds.
- When pet waste decays in water, it uses up oxygen and releases ammonia, which can lead to fish kills.

### ■ YOU'RE REQUIRED BY LAW TO REMOVE AND PROPERLY DISPOSE OF YOUR DOG'S WASTE.

(Haverhill, MA Ordinance Chapter 137 Article III) This applies to sidewalks, streets, parks, and neighbors' yards. You must be prepared to clean up after your dog when walking them, either with a bag or some other means, and must properly dispose of the waste.

### Pet Waste Disposal

- When walking your dog, always carry a bag with you to pick up your pet's waste. Pet waste left on the ground poses a health risk to humans and the environment.
- Throw pet waste in the trash, using a plastic bag and tying it off to seal it. You may also purchase special biodegradable bags at pet stores, which will not last as long in a landfill.
- Pet waste can be buried on your own property by digging a hole at least 6 inches deep and away from gardens, waterbodies, or play areas.
- There are pet waste collection services that can be hired to do the dirty work for you. A quick Web search will reveal local companies.



### Pet Care

- Wash pets indoors in a bathtub or sink, or consider having them professionally groomed. Avoid washing your pet outdoors, where runoff may flow untreated into the storm drain.
- If indoor washing is not possible, then at least wash pets on a grassy or vegetated area. The vegetation often slows runoff and acts as a filter by trapping pollutants in the top layer of soil, preventing them from reaching a waterbody.
- Consider using alternative, non-toxic flea and tick control products and solutions, whether applied directly to your pet or when treating your yard. If using chemical-based shampoos or sprays, dispose of unused quantities properly.



Most stormwater pollution is caused by the actions of uninformed people. Share what you know with your family, friends and neighbors, and help protect our streams, ponds, lakes, wetlands, and rivers.



### CONTACT INFORMATION

To report a spill any time .....City of Haverhill Police Department: 978-373-1212  
To report suspicious stormwater-related activities .....Stormwater Hotline: 978-374-2334  
For additional stormwater information .....Stormwater Program Coordinator: 978-374-2383  
or visit [www.haverhillma.gov/departments/stormwater](http://www.haverhillma.gov/departments/stormwater)

# Every pet owner's role in protecting Haverhill's waters

As stormwater flows over our driveways, lawns, sidewalks, parking lots, and other surfaces, it picks up debris, chemicals, dirt, and other pollutants, including pet waste. This water then flows into storm drains, carrying those pollutants to the nearest pond, lake, stream, river, or wetland. Anything that enters our storm drain system is discharged untreated into Haverhill's waterbodies, which we use for swimming, fishing, and in some cases, as a supply for drinking water.

*Polluted runoff is our community's greatest threat to clean water.*

This brochure contains a list of household habits that Haverhill pet owners should follow to help protect our city's waterbodies. By practicing these habits, we can keep pet waste out of stormwater—and out of our ponds, lakes, wetlands, streams, and rivers. Together, we can protect our waters from polluted stormwater runoff.



City of Haverhill Wastewater Department

## **STORMWATER PROGRAM**

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[www.haverhillma.gov/departments/stormwater](http://www.haverhillma.gov/departments/stormwater)