

Jefferson County Department of Storm Water Management



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JeffCo H₂O News

1 DROP MATTERS!



REPAIR LEAKS, CLEAN UP SPILLS.

PROPERLY MAINTAIN YOUR VEHICLES

ONE DROP OF OIL LEAKED FROM EACH VEHICLE IN JEFFERSON COUNTY
POLLUTES 16 MILLION GALLONS OF WATER PER DAY.

REPORT SUSPECTED WATER POLLUTION, CALL 325-5792



Drips, Dust, Rainbows and Suds

Did you ever see a rainbow in a parking lot after it's rained? These little reminders that oil and water don't mix show up on paved areas as a result of vehicle leaks. Their size may seem small, but their impact can be huge. If just one drop of oil dripped from each of the 740,000 vehicles registered in Jefferson County, it would result in 64 quarts of oil capable of polluting 16 million gallons of water! That's why fixing even small leaks and properly cleaning up spills can make a big difference in our local water quality. But cars aren't the only culprits. Lawn equipment and recreational vehicles also can be sources of sneaky leaks. Regular maintenance and proper cleanup can reduce the effects of these problems. If you change your own oil and fluids, make sure you carefully collect and take them to one of the many local businesses which accept these for recycling, and properly clean up any drips or spills. Using a hose to clean the driveway carries oil and fluids into the storm drainage system which empties into local waterways. A better solution is to sprinkle some absorbent material like cat litter on the area, let it soak up the drips, sweep it up, and dispose of it in the trash.

Washing vehicles and lawn equipment on paved areas produces a stream of detergents, oils, grease, fluids, and brake dust comprised of toxic heavy metals which – you guessed it – flows right into the nearest storm drain. Consider washing vehicles and equipment on grassy areas to allow wash water and the substances it carries to soak into the ground rather than run off. Another alternative is to take vehicles to a commercial car wash, since these facilities are required to treat wash water before it is released.

Making stormwater friendly choices like these can go a long way toward keeping our waterways safe and clean!

Focus On: R&T Fleet Management

From bumper to bumper, the Roads and Transportation Department's Fleet Management Division has taken the three 'Rs' (recycle, reuse, refurbish) to a new level! The program focuses on obtaining the greatest value from the County's fleet and its operations. Fleet Management recycles oil, filters, Freon, batteries and tires; reuses fleet parts and shop rags; and sells inoperable vehicles, parts and scrap metal. The bottom line is that the program saves tax dollars, generates income, reduces material waste, and is environmentally responsible. A big THANK YOU to Fleet Management for its work managing and maintaining the County's fleet of cars, trucks, and other equipment!

What's Happening?

Urban Forestry Fair, February 18 - Come on out to Linn Park 9 am - 2 pm to receive FREE tree seedlings ready for planting. Sponsored by the National Resources Conservation Service and the Alabama Forestry Commission.

22nd Annual Birmingham Plant Dig, February 22 - Grab your garden tools, gloves and containers and head to the New Georgia Landfill 10 am - 2 pm to stock up on FREE plants for your yard. Sponsored by the Keep Birmingham Beautiful Commission, Alabama Forestry Commission, and Birmingham Public Works Department. Call 787-5222 to learn more.

Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Disposal - Got latex paint, yard chemicals, solvents, or other HHW that is not acceptable for disposal in regular trash pickup? [Mercedes Benz](#) U.S. International, Inc. in Vance, a zero waste to landfill facility, accepts HHW from the public on the third Friday of the month from 5-8 am and 1-6 pm.

Congratulations!

Hana Burwinkle, Education Training Coordinator with the Storm Water Management Department, received the 2013 Vulcan Materials Volunteer of the Year award for her work serving as the Jefferson County coordinator for Alabama People Against a Littered State (AL-PALS).

Hana was instrumental in identifying project leaders and coordinating resources for 12 communities which resulted in 241 volunteers donating 758 hours of work and removing 1,062 bags of trash from along roadways.

Do you know an employee who has received an award or other recognition for protecting or improving the environment? Send us the details for inclusion in the next JeffCo H₂O News!

Take the 'Hazard' out of Household Hazardous Waste

We've all got it . . . stacked in the garage, stuffed under the kitchen sink, or gathering dust in the pantry - a collection of old household products that we purchased but no longer need, and now we don't know what to do with them. Many of these items may contain corrosive, toxic, ignitable, or reactive ingredients which should not be discarded with regular household trash because they require special handling by a facility which accepts Household Hazardous Waste (HHW). It may be surprising to learn that commercial products like drain openers and cleaners that contain bleach are considered to be HHW. Certainly there are some household jobs that involve specialized products for which there is no substitute. But when purchasing household products that could become HHW, try to buy just enough for the job to eliminate leftovers. In many cases, you can choose a less toxic approach to tackle most household cleaning jobs. Items found in your kitchen or bathroom easily can be used to make [safe, inexpensive cleaners](#). They are better for your health and the environment, help reduce the purchase of more toxic products, and cost less! There are many tips and recipes available online for making your own cleaning products. A good starting point is [GreenerChoices.org](#).



It's always best to try the least toxic product first! When it's necessary to use a more 'heavy duty' option, be sure to properly store or dispose of any leftover product.

To report suspected water pollution, call 205.325.5792. Questions or comments? Email diclementel@jccal.org or call 205.325.8741.