



**C**lean beaches and healthy creeks, rivers, bays and ocean are important to Orange County. However, many common activities can lead to water pollution if you're not careful. Extra water flowing off lawns can carry fertilizer and pesticides as well as other pollutants from our streets and sidewalks into the storm drains. This polluted water then flows untreated directly into our creeks, rivers, bays and ocean.

You would never intentionally put litter, motor oil, pesticides and fertilizer into the ocean, so don't overwater your lawn, which can carry these pollutants into our waterways. Follow these easy tips to help prevent water pollution.

For More Information,

Please call the Orange County Stormwater Program at

**714-567-6363**

or visit

**[www.ocwatersheds.com](http://www.ocwatersheds.com)**

To report a spill,

**Call the**

**Orange County 24-hour  
Water Pollution Problem  
Reporting Hotline**

**1-877-89-SPILL (1-877-897-7455)**

**For emergencies, dial 911.**

The tips contained in this brochure provide useful information about how you can keep soap, chemicals and washwater from your mobile business from entering the storm drain system.

If you have other suggestions, please contact your city's stormwater representative or call the Orange County Stormwater Program at 714-567-6363.



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Help Prevent Ocean Pollution:

## Tips to Prevent Overwatering



The Ocean Begins at  
Your Front Door



# Tips to Prevent Overwatering

## *Does your community have watering restrictions?*

Many Orange County communities have responded to our drought by implementing laws that restrict how many times per week residents can water their lawns, or for how long, and/or at what times.

Check with your city or local water district to determine if local watering restrictions affect you.

## *Does Your Lawn Need to Be Watered?*

- During the rainy season, your lawn needs far less water than during the summer.
- If your blades of grass spring up after you step on them, they are adequately watered.
- If your grass is a vibrant green and is not pale, it is receiving enough water.
- Overwatering during rainy season can contribute to root damage and lawn disease.

## *Water at Sunrise*

- Watering early in the morning will reduce water loss due to evaporation.
- Wind tends to die down in the early morning, so the water will get to the lawn as intended.

## *Avoid Water Runoff*

Even during the hottest summer months, you can often see water runoff going into our storm drains and into our waterways. This runoff is almost always the result of overwatering of lawns. The water carries litter, motor oil, pet waste and other pollutants into our storm drains, which flow untreated to the ocean. Water runoff both wastes water and pollutes our waterways.

**IT'S THE LAW!** The following BMPs will help you maintain compliance with regulations.

- Aim your sprinklers at your lawn, not the sidewalk. By simply adjusting the direction of your sprinklers you can save water, prevent water pollution from runoff and keep your lawn healthy.
- Set a timer for your sprinklers. Lawns absorb the water they need to stay healthy with within about five minutes. After that, water often begins running off into the streets and into the storm drain system.
- Consider Using Smart Irrigation Controllers. Smart irrigation controllers have internal clocks as well as sensors that will turn off the sprinklers in response to environmental changes. If it is raining, too windy or too cold, the smart irrigation control sprinklers will automatically shut off.
- Check with your local water agency for available rebates on irrigation controllers and smart timers.
- Use California Friendly Plants or Native Vegetation. "California Friendly" plants or native vegetation can significantly reduce water use. These plants often require far less fertilizers and pesticides, which are two significant pollutants found in Orange County waterways.
- Water by hand. Instead of using sprinklers, consider watering your yard by hand. Hand-watering ensures that all plants get the proper amount of water and you will prevent any water runoff, which wastes water and carries pollutants into our waterways.
- Fix leaks. Nationwide, households waste one trillion gallons of water a year to leaks – that is enough water to serve the entire state of Texas for a year. If your garden hose is leaking, replace the nylon or rubber hose washer and ensure a tight connection. Fix broken sprinklers immediately.



## *Be careful with pesticides and fertilizer*

- Never apply pesticides or fertilizer when rain is predicted within the next 48 hours.
- Read labels and use only as directed. Do not over-apply pesticides or fertilizers. Apply to spots as needed rather than blanketing an entire area.
- Rinse empty pesticide containers and re-use the rinse water as you would use the product. Do not dump rinse water down into the street or storm drains. Dispose of empty containers in the trash.



## *Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance*

State legislation that went into effect on January 1, 2010 requires all California cities and counties to adopt a Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance. The Municipal Water District of Orange County and Orange County Division of the League of California Cities worked collaboratively to produce a Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance specific to the needs of Orange County.

The new ordinance and guidelines apply to the following landscaping projects:

- New homeowner-installed-or-hired landscapes 5,000 square feet or larger.
- New and rehabilitated public agency, private development and developer-installed landscape projects that are 2,500 square feet or larger.
- If the new ordinance applies to your project, please contact your local city planning department.

*\*For more detailed information about water pollution prevention tips, please visit:*

[www.ocwatersheds.com/publiced](http://www.ocwatersheds.com/publiced)

