

## **What is the appropriate way to dispose of stormwater?**

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**BACKGROUND:** In 1988 the Code of the City of Lewes was amended (Chapter 158 – Sewers) to make it illegal for anyone to discharge or drain stormwater or surface water through a downspout or other apparatus into the sanitary sewer system of the city. All stormwater must be maintained on the property on which the structure(s) is located. Stormwater may be directed to the public stormwater management system by a method approved by either the office of the City Manager or the Board of Public Works of The City of Lewes. (City Web Site: <http://ecode360.com/7033408>)

**NOTICE:** The Lewes BPW will be conducting city-wide testing to locate these connections and ascertain other system maintenance issues in the near future. Notice will be provided in advance of testing. Testing involves pumping smoke into the sewer and looking for signs of smoke emerging from stormwater pipes such as roof gutter downpipes.

**Sewage Problems:** Problems can occur when stormwater runs into the sewerage system. The integrity of sewers is often compromised by illegal stormwater connections, faulty joints, tree roots cracking pipes, redevelopment of property and age. Stormwater infiltration into the sewer during and following rainfall events can cause the sewerage system to have too much water and to overflow during heavy rains, the rainwater mixes with sewage and results in raw sewage being directly discharged into water bodies. This can pose serious environmental and public health risks.

**BPW Storm Water System:** The Stormwater Fee is charged to every customer of the BPW to pay for the stormwater system that protects us all during precipitation events. Stormwater that does not soak into the ground becomes surface runoff and flows into the stormwater system manage its effects for the greater good of the community. The Stormwater Fee is not charged to pay for a catch basin in front of your home or business. The monies collected under this BPW charge are used to cover the overall costs of the infrastructure of the Stormwater System. More importantly, the stormwater system keeps the essential roadways clear so all may be able to travel on these roads during precipitation events. This storm water system is separate from the sewage system that processes the sewer wastewater in the *Howard Seymour Water Reclamation Plant of the City of Lewes*.

**Responsibility of Property Owners:** Property owners should make certain that their downspouts are flowing onto their property and not into the sewage system. The BPW encourages Lewes property owners to include rain gardens, rain barrels, and maximize porous surfaces in their landscaping designs to minimize storm water runoff.

**QUESTIONS:** If you have further questions about the stormwater disposal, please contact the BPW General Manager, Darrin Gordon: 302-645-6228 or go to: [www.lewesbpw.delaware.gov](http://www.lewesbpw.delaware.gov)