



**Blount County Recycling Center
accepts household hazardous waste:**

Address 331 Levi Street, Maryville, TN | Phone: 865-268-3238

Website: <https://www.blounttn.gov/2026/Recycling>

Protecting Our Waters:
Safely Managing Lawn Chemicals and
Automotive Fluids, Identifying and
Reporting Illicit Discharges



What is Stormwater?

Stormwater comes from rain or snow that has fallen on rooftops or pavement and cannot soak into the ground. Instead, it flows over the ground surface and into nearby storm drain pipes and ditches. Along the way, it picks up dirt, chemicals, and other trash. These pollutants are carried by stormwater to wherever it flows.

How do pollutants get into waterways?

Some people think stormwater flows to a water treatment plant where pollutants are removed. **This is not true!** In fact, storm drainage pipes and ditches carry stormwater directly to our local streams, rivers, and lakes. So, the pollutants picked up by stormwater end up in our local waterways, which serve as recreation areas and sources of drinking water. In suburban areas, stormwater routinely washes substances like litter, fertilizers, and pesticides from parking lots, roadways, and lawns into local streams. Some people unwisely dispose their grass clippings, leaves, and even household chemicals, such as motor oil and paint, into storm drains. These substances are washed into waterways too, making pollution worse. Stormwater pollution can harm aquatic plants and wildlife. It can also limit recreational swimming, fishing, and can even make treatment for drinking water more expensive.

How should I handle lawn chemicals and automotive oil and fluids?

The way we use, store, and dispose of household chemicals and automotive fluids is especially important. You should always store them in a place where they will not come into contact with rain or snow. A garage, basement, or covered outdoor storage area is a great place to keep these potential pollutants.

When you use lawn or automotive chemicals, ALWAYS follow the directions.

Lawn chemicals should never be used in areas adjacent to streams, rivers, or lakes. They should also never be used when rain or snow is in the forecast. If the chemicals are granular, make sure you sweep them off driveways, roads, and sidewalks and onto lawns and landscaped areas. Do not dispose of any of them in a stormdrain or throw them in the trash, instead take them to the Blount County Recycling Center.

If you do your own automobile maintenance, make sure you have oil absorbent nearby in case of a spill or leak. Clean up any spills or leaks and put the absorbent in a trash bag and put it in the trash. Do not leave it on the ground. Do not dispose of any of these chemicals in a stormdrain. Used or left over fluids should not be placed in the trash. Instead, take them to the Blount County Recycling Center.

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What are illicit discharges?

Only stormwater is allowed in the stormwater drainage system. When any other substance gets intentionally or accidentally put into stormwater pipes or ditches, it is called an illegal or illicit discharge. Sometimes, buildings or homes have pipes that are illegally connected to the stormwater drainage system for getting rid of waste. Others might dump their waste into these drains. **Remember, putting anything except stormwater into the stormwater drainage system is against the law!**

What are the signs of an illicit discharge?

Where the stormwater drainage system meets a body of water is called a stormwater outfall. It can be a pipe or a ditch. If the outfall is flowing but it has not rained recently, it might mean there is an illegal discharge. If you see sewage waste (e.g., toilet paper), smell something bad, or notice suds or other signs of pollution, it could mean there is an illicit discharge that needs to be investigated.

What to do if you suspect an illicit discharge

Call the Blount County hotline at (865) 273-5756
Email us: stormwater@blounttn.org

Fill out a County Citizen Complaint Form on our website:

<https://tn-blountcounty.civicplus.com/305/Stormwater>