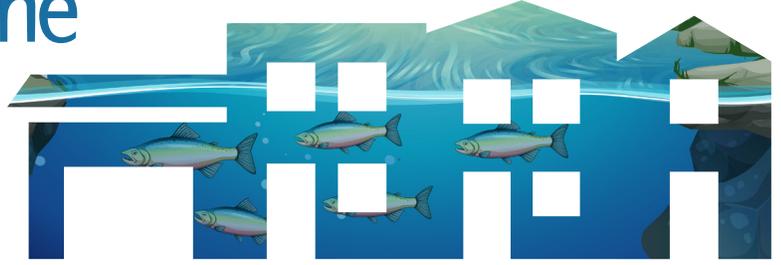


# have a business in the **ROUGE RIVER WATERSHED?**



learn how to protect water quality inside, outside & under your building



*Working together, restoring the river*

**A watershed, also referred to as a drainage basin, is the land area that delivers rain and snow/ice melt to a stream or lake. Every business in Michigan is in a watershed!**

When rain and snow/ice melt travel across the land (watershed) and into storm drains, it is called stormwater or runoff. As this runoff travels, it picks up trash, animal waste, chemicals, sediments and dissolved substances along the way until it discharges into the nearest waterbody. Small streams (tributaries) join to form rivers and flow across sloping land, eventually flowing into a lake. Even if your business is not "next to the river," your actions still have an impact on the Rouge River watershed.

## best management practices (BMPs) for businesses

### Inside your building

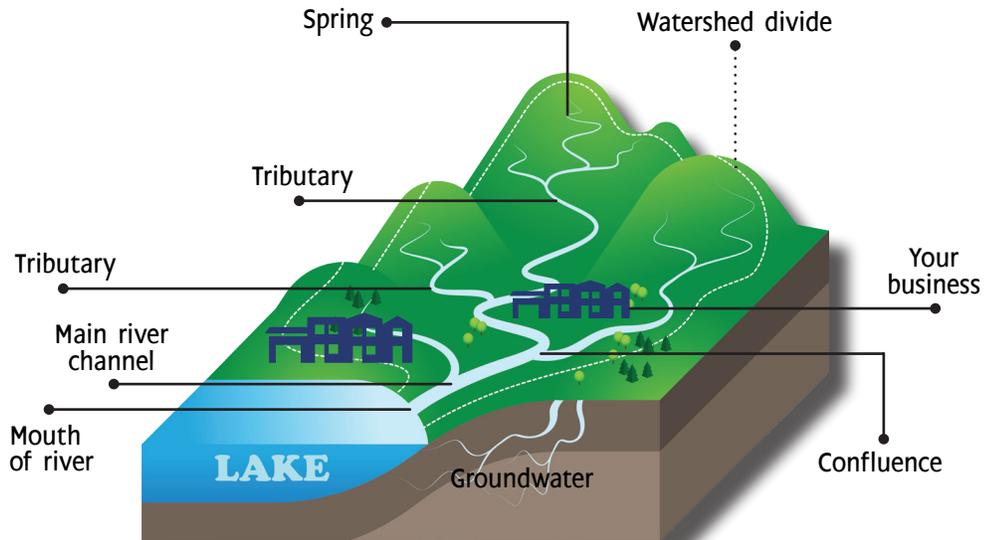
The way you use, dispose and store chemicals, batteries and other materials inside your building can influence water quality in the Rouge River.

### Outside your building

Because stormwater enters streams and rivers through storm drains, the curbs, gutters, parking lots and ditches outside your building play an important role in the health of the Rouge River.

### Under your building

Even things underneath your building that you can't see, like pipes that were changed with renovations or expansion, can affect the Rouge River.



**How a watershed works:** rain and melting snow travel by gravity within an area of land to a single body of water such as a creek, river, or lake. As it drains it picks up trash, animal waste, chemicals, sediments and dissolved substances around homes and businesses, which eventually goes right to a body of water!

**adopting BMPs inside, outside and under your business can have a positive impact on your profits, customers, employees, wildlife and their habitat, and even the communities downstream!**



## BMPs Inside Your Building to Protect Water Quality

Clean grease traps in restaurants regularly so fats, oils and grease (FOG) don't build up and clog the sanitary sewer systems.

Make sure floor drains, especially those in wash bays, are properly connected to the sanitary sewer - not the storm drain.

Implement sustainable practices like switching lights to LEDs.

Wash water, stripper and wax wash from buffing floors should be disposed of in an indoor drain - not a storm drain in your parking lot.

Wash floor mats, filters and garbage cans in a location that will ensure that the wastewater will go into the sanitary system and not the storm drain outside.

Keep spill cleanup kits ready and emergency numbers clearly posted throughout your business. Sweep up spills immediately using dry cleanup methods.



Provide training sessions or informational materials to educate employees on proper disposal and pollution prevention practices for the business.



Store chemicals in a designated area which includes secondary containment in case the original containers leak.

Use drip pans or containers when repairing vehicles or equipment to reduce risk of spills.



Implement a recycling station for plastic, paper/cardboard, glass and aluminum.

Use biodegradable or environmentally-friendly cleaning products when feasible.

Dispose of hazardous wastes like chemicals, paints, and batteries properly.

Consider buying remanufactured office equipment and ink and toner cartridges to reduce your environmental impact.



## BMPs Under Your Building to Protect Water Quality

Consider having your sanitary drains (sinks, floor drains, etc.) inspected to make sure they are properly connected to the sanitary sewer system and not to the storm system or directly to the ground.

Inspect decorative fountains on your property to make sure the underground filtration and circulation systems are working correctly. It should be regularly cleaned and have appropriate chlorine levels.

Work with city or county authorities if you are contacted about elevated *E. coli* levels close to your business. Coordinate with them to test your sanitary connections and if something is found, correct it.

Train employees to watch for signs of illicit discharges like discolored or foamy water and strange smells. Any concerns should be reported immediately.

Inspect detention/retention ponds on your property regularly to make sure pipes are clean, trash is not blocking the inlets/outlets and that no dumping has occurred.



Never reroute sanitary drains on your property without verifying their connection to a sanitary sewer system. If a sewer pipe is mis-connected to a storm drain system, this is an illicit connection and is harmful to water quality.



# BMPs Outside Your Building to Protect Water Quality

Pick up trash and litter around your property to prevent it from going into the storm drain and never dump waste into a storm drain or directly to a lake or river.

Never dispose of wash water, spent fluids or any materials in the storm drain, river or on paved surfaces.

Maintain suitable loading dock areas to prevent the potential for spills and leaks.

Inspect fuel and chemical storage tanks on your property regularly for leaks.



Clean up leaks or spills outside immediately with dry absorbent and dispose of properly; never wash it down the storm drain.



Keep dumpster areas clean and lids closed so items don't blow away. Inspect containers and waste disposal areas regularly for leaks and replace or repair immediately if found.

Clean paved surfaces routinely by sweeping parking lots to pick up trash and debris to reduce pollution reaching the river.

Do not hose down sidewalks or parking lots unless it is going to a grassy area where it can infiltrate into the ground.

Don't over-apply salt to sidewalks and parking lots in winter months. Excess salt can contribute substantially to increased chloride entering our waterways through storm drains.

Make sure wash water from pressure washing drains to the sanitary sewer not a storm drain.

Apply fertilizer on golf courses properly and store fertilizer in a covered area.

Rinse golf carts on grassy areas and make sure soap wash water drains to the sanitary sewer, not a storm drain.



Stencil "no dumping, drains to river" next to your storm drains so employees are aware.

Limit the use of herbicides, pesticides or fertilizers and never apply close to any watercourse. Always follow a product's label for proper use and application.

Instruct landscapers to mulch grass which serves as a natural fertilizer. Have them avoid blowing grass clippings and leaves into the street and parking lots to keep them out of the storm drains.

Sweep fertilizer or grass clippings from paved surfaces back onto the turf area.

Clean vehicles at a commercial car/truck wash station if you don't have one on your property. They should not be washed onsite where water would go down a storm drain.

Consider adding vegetative buffers to slow stormwater runoff if your property is along the Rouge River.



Plant rain gardens around your building. Their deep roots slow runoff and provide filtration before stormwater enters the river.



Give back to the community your business is in and improve morale by having employees volunteer for river cleanup events or work days.

# Why Implement BMPs in Your Business?

Businesses have a direct effect on the water quality in the Rouge River watershed. This impacts your customers, your employees, your bottom line, wildlife and their habitat, and even the communities downstream.

Training your employees to use the BMPs discussed in this brochure will improve the quality of the stormwater runoff on your property in a cost-effective manner.

As a business and important member of your community, you should understand the frequently used terms below connected to water quality.

## Non-point source

Businesses in the Rouge River watershed can contribute to poor water quality through “non-point” sources, pollution which occurs when runoff picks up trash and debris on the land and discharges it to a water body.

## Sanitary sewer vs. storm drain

Businesses should know the difference between sanitary sewer and storm drain systems. The water in the sanitary sewer comes from the sinks, floor drains and toilets in your business and is treated before being released back into a waterway. While water in the storm drains consists of runoff from rain and snow and sometimes groundwater which is not treated before entering the Rouge River or other waterways. Therefore, any materials and debris on your property can damage waterways.

## Illicit discharges

An illicit discharge is any discharge containing polluting material, such as sediment, nutrients, oil and bacteria. These discharges can drain to lakes and streams via storm drains. The communities in Southeast Michigan are required to

prevent illicit discharges from entering stormwater. It is also important for your employees to report any of the below signs of potential illicit discharges or dumping to a storm drain or water body. These discharges can be reported to your local department of public works or to the State and counties using the numbers below.

Things to report:

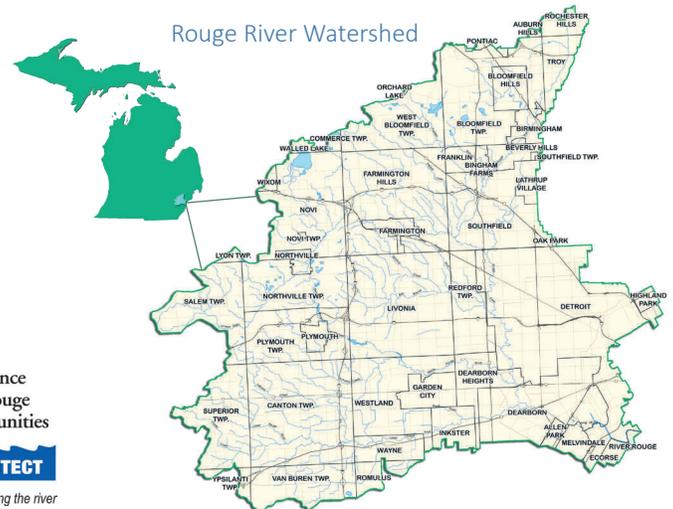
- Discolored water in lakes, rivers and streams.
- Spills and contamination to lakes, rivers and streams.
- Suspicious dumping to catch basins or waterways.
- Unusual discharges from pipes.
- Sewage on the ground or draining to surface water.
- Large number of dead fish in waterways.
- Failing or leaking septic systems.
- Polluted runoff from storage piles or dumpsters to catch basins or waterways.
- Sewage, detergent, chemical, petroleum or rotten egg odors.
- Soil erosion from construction sites.

REPORT ILLEGAL DUMPING	
Michigan's Pollution Alert System	800-292-4706
Macomb County	877-679-4337 or IDEP@macombcountymi.gov
Oakland County	248-858-0931
St. Clair County	277-504-SWIM
Washtenaw County	734-222-3880 or <a href="https://washtenaw.org/196/Report-an-Issue">https://washtenaw.org/196/Report-an-Issue</a>
Wayne County	888-223-2363

## Alliance of Rouge Communities

The Alliance of Rouge Communities, or ARC, is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization consisting of local municipalities, counties, educational institutions and stewardship groups working together to improve the Rouge River. Founded in 2005, the ARC is funded by membership dues from local governments and supported by grants. The ARC and its partners work cooperatively to protect the Rouge River while meeting water quality requirements mandated by the State's stormwater permit and restoring beneficial uses, such as canoeing, fishing and other recreational activities, to the Rouge River. The ARC delivers better water quality for less cost to its members!

Contact us at: [info@allianceofrougecommunities.com](mailto:info@allianceofrougecommunities.com)



For more information, visit:

[www.allianceofrougecommunities.com/business.html](http://www.allianceofrougecommunities.com/business.html)