

Visit the Following Web Sites for More Details on Pet Waste:

- **EPA: Pet Waste Management**
http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater/menuofbmps/index.cfm?action=factsheet_results&view=specific&bmp=4
- **University of Maryland Cooperative Extension Service — Pet Waste and Water Quality**
<http://extension.umd.edu/publications/pdfs/fs703.pdf>
- **Clean Water Campaign — Properly Disposing of Pet Waste**
<http://www.cleanwatercampaign.com/html/639.htm>
- **Pet Waste Outreach Campaign**
http://www.des.state.nh.us/organization/divisions/water/wmb/coastal/scoop_the_poop.htm
- **Snohomish County, WA — Pet Waste**
http://www1.co.snohomish.wa.us/Departments/Public_Works/Divisions/SWM/Services/Water_Pollution/Pet_Waste.htm

Prince George's County Department of Environmental Resources

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DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

Pet Waste

Improving Water Quality in Your Community



RUSHERN L. BAKER, III
County Executive

The Straight Scoop

Common Myths about Pet Waste

MYTH: Pet waste doesn't hurt the environment.

FACT: Sooner or later, pet waste left on the ground will find its way to our storm drains, streams and rivers. When pet waste washes into streams, it decomposes and produces substances called nutrients that consume the oxygen in the water that fish and other aquatic animals need to live. Most importantly, pet waste contains disease-causing germs and parasites that can make our streams and rivers unsafe for swimming. Children, gardeners and other pets that come in contact with pet waste also are at risk of infection.

MYTH: Pet waste decays quickly.

FACT: Pet waste breaks down extremely slow, causing un-scooped waste to accumulate faster than it breaks down. In the wintertime, abandoned pet waste freezes and remains for several weeks or even months! That's plenty of time for rain or melted snow to wash the waste into a storm drain, where it flows into our streams and rivers.

MYTH: Waste from my ONE dog can't hurt.

FACT: The average dog defecates about three-quarters of a pound of feces each day. In one year, Prince George's County issued around 16,300 dog licenses; that amounts to almost 6 tons of pet waste daily, which is equal to 215 dump truck loads every day. If everyone decided to stop picking up his or her pet's waste, imagine the amount of pet waste that would pile up in one month!

MYTH: No one cares if I pick up after my pet or not.

FACT: No one likes to smell, look at or step in pet waste! Most complaints about pets arise when their owners don't pick up the waste. More complaints are received for pet waste than for aggressive dogs, barking or dogs running loose. Leaving pet waste in our parks, on our neighbors' lawns or on sidewalks gives some people one more reason to dislike pets and their owners. In Prince George's County, it is also against the law to leave your pet's waste on public or private property and may result in fines up to \$250. Picking up your pet's waste sets a good example for other pet owners, and your neighbors will appreciate it, too.

MYTH: Picking up after my dog is too inconvenient and messy.

FACT: It is no one's favorite job, but it has become easier. Since so many dog owners have recognized the importance of scooping up pet waste, the market has responded with some inexpensive, easy-to-use tools. These tools include tiny bags to fit in your pocket or clip onto your dog's leash, waste scoopers with long handles and scoopers that bag the waste as you pick it up. After picking up the waste, you can flush it down the toilet or double-bag it and put it in the trash. There are even pet waste digesters you can install in your yard that work like a septic tank. These products can be found at many pet stores or online, and plastic grocery bags and newspaper bags are still a free alternative.

Pick up after your pet!

It's easy as A-B-C

A. Bring a bag



B. Clean it up



C. Dispose of it properly (toilet or trash)

