

# BEST PRACTICES



## Help Prevent Flooding in Your Neighborhood

### A single storm can dump millions of gallons of water in our cities and county.

Rain cannot soak into the soil through hard surfaces like rooftops, roads, and parking lots. Instead, it flows over these hard surfaces or pools up if it has no place to flow. As stormwater runs over these surfaces, it picks up pollutants like oil leaked from cars, tire bits, lawn chemicals, dog poop and more.

*To help prevent flooding in roads and in our neighborhoods, the cities and the county built a system of storm drains, pipes, ditches and ponds to carry the water off our roads.*

### What is a stormwater system?

A stormwater system is a network of engineered structures designed to prevent flooding by moving stormwater away from homes and off our streets. Stormwater systems include:

- Storm drains,
- Underground pipes,
- Drainage ditches,
- Stormwater ponds, and
- Much more.

Newer stormwater facilities also include features to help remove pollutants from the water before it flows on into inlets, lakes, streams, or down into our groundwater supplies.

*Your neighborhood's stormwater system needs to be checked and maintained regularly—just like your car—or they won't work right and may break down.*

Storm drains, stormwater ponds and other parts of your neighborhood's stormwater system need to be regularly checked and cleaned out. Otherwise, they can become clogged and lead to flooding. In many neighborhoods, it's the neighborhood's responsibility to inspect and maintain all or part of the stormwater system.

### Want to find out if your neighborhood is responsible to maintain its stormwater system?

Contact your local stormwater inspector:

- **Lacey:** Gagan Brar (360) 451-2868
- **Olympia:** Kane Osstifin (360) 753-8579
- **Thurston County:** Skyler Specht (360) 867-2079
- **Tumwater:** Matthew Joseph (360) 754-4140



**Prevent flooding in your neighborhood:**

- 1. Rake leaves and debris off of storm drains to prevent clogging.**
  - Stay safe, wear a high visibility vest and have someone look out for cars for you.
- 2. Inspect your neighborhood storm drains and have them cleaned out when necessary.**
  - Visit your jurisdiction's website to learn how to inspect and maintain storm drains.
- 3. Keep grass, leaves, dirt or debris from getting into roadways and drainage ditches.**
  - Do not sweep, blow or pressure wash debris into the street where it can clog storm drains or enter into drainage ditches.

**What to do if the road is flooded.**

- 1. Contact your local jurisdiction if you think storm drains are clogged and you cannot safely unclog them.**
  - **Lacey:** (360) 491-5644
  - **Olympia:** (360) 753-8333
  - **Thurston County:** (360) 867-2300
  - **Tumwater:** (360) 754-4150
- 2. Turn around, don't drown.**
  - If the road is flooded, do not attempt to drive through it.
  - According to the National Weather Service, six inches of water in the road can cause most passenger cars to stall or lose control.

**Stay informed.**

**Check rainfall, stream and groundwater levels at [monitoring.thurstonwater.org/](https://monitoring.thurstonwater.org/)**

Find current and historic levels for rainfall, the status of local streams and groundwater levels by visiting Thurston County's monitoring website.

**Stay Safe: Sign up for severe weather alerts.**

The National Weather Service sends warnings for tsunamis, tornadoes, flash floods, extreme winds, blizzards, ice storms and more. You can receive Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) on your mobile device. The service is free and automatic, if your cell phone is WEA-capable. For more information on Wireless Emergency Alerts on your cell phone visit [thurstoncountywa.gov/em/Pages/ei-alert.aspx](https://thurstoncountywa.gov/em/Pages/ei-alert.aspx).

*Source: Stream Team News, Fall 2021*