

Pet waste is a significant source of fecal bacteria in Alexandria. When pet waste is left on lawns or on streets and not properly disposed of, it can wash into nearby streams or be carried by runoff into storm drains.

These storm drains do not connect to treatment facilities. Instead, they drain directly into our streams, the Potomac River and eventually into the Chesapeake Bay.



Pet owners must collect their animal's waste so it does not wash into drains or streams

5 Things you can do to reduce pet waste pollution

- 1. Always clean up after your pet**
- 2. Never dispose of pet waste in a storm drain**
- 3. Pick up and bag waste, place it in the trash**
- 4. Flush pet waste down the toilet (but not kitty litter or debris)**
- 5. Encourage other pet owners to be responsible**



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When Nature Calls, Please Pick Up... After Your Pet!



Pet Waste Disposal, Water Quality and Your Health

Are You Risking Your Health?

When pet waste is left on the ground or disposed of improperly, water quality suffers and your health may be at risk also.

Children playing outside are at the highest risk of infection from bacteria and parasites found in pet waste. Flies may also spread diseases found in pet waste. Some of these bacteria and parasites include:

Campylobacteriosis – a bacterial infection carried by dogs and cats that frequently causes diarrhea in humans.

Salmonellosis – the most common bacterial infection transmitted to humans by other animals. Symptoms include fever, muscle aches, headache, vomiting, and diarrhea.

Toxocariasis – roundworms usually transmitted from dogs to humans, often without noticeable symptoms, but may cause vision loss, a rash, fever, or cough.

Toxoplasmosis – a parasite carried by cats that can cause birth defects if a woman becomes infected during pregnancy that can also be a problem for people with depressed immune systems.

Are you polluting our waters?

Did you know that most of Alexandria's streams exceed Virginia's water quality standards for fecal coliform and/or E. coli bacteria?

Escherichia coli (*E. coli*) bacteria is present in the intestinal tracts of all warm-blooded animals and is an indicator that other pathogens may be present. For recreational waters, fecal coliform was the primary bacteria indicator until relatively recently, when EPA began recommending *E. coli* and enterococci as better indicators of health risk from water contact. Virginia has incorporated *E. coli* in the state water quality standards and monitors accordingly.

The nutrients and organic matter in pet waste can also cause significant water quality degradation. Excess nutrients can cause algae blooms that block sunlight and kill underwater vegetation. Decaying pet waste uses up dissolved oxygen in the water that fish, vegetation and other aquatic species rely on to live. All streams in Alexandria drain to the Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay. By picking up after our pets, Alexandria can make a real contribution to improving our local water quality and the health of the Chesapeake Bay.

Simple Ways to Love Your Pet and the Environment!

Always clean up after your pet. Failure to do so on public property is subject to a \$100 fine (City Code §5-7-46).

Proper ways of disposing pet waste include:

Bagging and placing pet waste in the trash

Never dispose of pet waste in a storm drain. These drains lead directly to local waterways.

Encourage other pet owners to be responsible. It is an important part of the responsibility of owning a pet. We all suffer the consequences of ignoring irresponsible pet owners.

The City has several managed dog exercise areas. Please contact the Alexandria Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities at (703) 838-4343 or visit <http://alexandriava.gov/recreation/info/default.aspx?id=12284#dog>