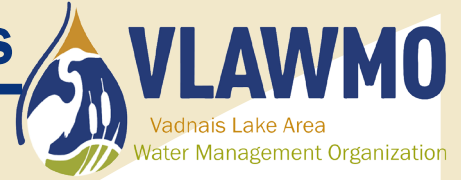


# Storm Drain Stenciling Instructions



## Why volunteer?

While most people would never pollute a lake, river, or wetland on purpose, there are many ways this happens on accident everyday. Human made and even natural material such as leaves do just that: contaminate our water.

How does this happen? Storm drains. When stormwater falls on hard surfaces like rooftops, driveways, parking lots, streets, or sidewalks, it picks up pollutants and nutrients as it runs across the surfaces. Once into a street, the storm drain (also known as catch basin) carries the water directly to a lake, stream, or wetland, unfiltered. Pollutants such as antifreeze, paint, car brake dust, cigarette butts, trash, gasoline, used motor oil, or animal waste find their way into the storm sewer and unfortunately harm fish, birds, frogs, and other wildlife. Natural debris such as grass clippings and leaves also pose problems to water, as they carry excess nutrients that cause algae blooms, also harming fish and wildlife, this time by consuming the oxygen from the water.

But that's why you're here! Now that you know the behind-the-scenes truth, you can help us spread the word and keep our water clean. Remember this handy phrase: "*Only rain down the drain*". Thank you for volunteering with VLAWMO! Stay safe and have a fun community service project with these instructions.

## Getting Started:

Selecting your sites: Each stencil kit contains a customized GIS map showing the streets in the VLAWMO watershed. These maps indicate which stormdrains drain to lakes, which to streams, and which to wetlands. Looking at the map, use your best judgement as to which stencil to use where. Are you close to a lake, wetland or a stream? Where will water reach first once it's down the drain?

- Plan your route with VLAWMO before you head out.
- Outdoor temperature must be at least 50 degrees F, with dry pavement for 4 hours following the project
- When in the field, a designated record keeper will keep track of storm drains that get painted
- All supplies fit into a large tupperware kit: 31" x 21" x 15" - please re-package the way it came
- Plan for time: Most teams are able to stencil 5-10 drains in about an hour
- If storm drains are found to be in different locations than the map, please mark this on the map

Etiquette: Neighbors in the area may ask what you're up do - let them know kindly and professionally. You're the expert! If a resident or business owner objects to stenciling in front of their property, or if there's a vehicle parked above the drain, simply skip that drain and move to another location.

You are representing your community organization as well as VLAWMO - Always be aware of traffic, respectful with equipment, and kind to neighbors and their property. Moving carefully and slowly is better than being in a rush.

Roles: Designate roles for your team. Clipboard (map/traffic watcher), painter, outreach director, transport/pack-up, and set-up/safety. Combine roles as required by the number of team members.

# Storm Drain Stenciling Instructions

## Safety:

Follow these safety guidelines:

- Avoid busy streets
- Wear old clothing and old closed-toed shoes
- Safety vests must be worn at all times
- Youth and children must be accompanied by an adult at all times
- Teams should be 4-8, including at least one adult
- Designate a team traffic watcher



All participants are to watch the training video at:  
[www.vlawmo.org/get-involved](http://www.vlawmo.org/get-involved)

## Stenciling:

Each can of paint is enough for stenciling approximately 10-12 catch basins. If children are on your team, have chaperones monitor their efforts to make sure they're not using too much paint.

### Stencil steps:

1. Only stencil on low-volume residential streets. Wear safety vests at all times.
2. Set up the traffic cones for a safety blockade, and to add visibility for passing vehicles.
3. Remove leaves and trash near the storm drain with wicker broom and dustpan. Place debris in trash bags. VLAWMO encourages sorting natural debris (leaves) and trash in separate bags.
4. Thoroughly clean the stenciling area with the broom, dustpan, and wire brush so that all debris and sediment is clear from the area that will be painted.
5. Orient the stencil so that it can be read from the street. Use blocks on stencil to hold it down, or have another volunteer hold it down (if they're willing).
6. Place stencil on **either side** of the storm drain - **not in the street**.
7. Thoroughly shake the can of paint. If you wish, wear gloves.
8. Spray paint cans **upside down**, moving wrists side-to-side, 6" to 8" away from stencil. Shake can occasionally. Spray lightly and evenly.

**Two light coats** work better than one heavy coat.

After a few completed storm drains, check back with the group: What's working?

How can you improve to be more efficient?

Photos appreciated!  
Send to [WAV@VLAWMO.ORG](mailto:WAV@VLAWMO.ORG)

## Clean-up:

1. Complete the **Stencil Tracking Sheet**: number of drains stenciled, brochures distributed, subwatersheds covered (page 3), number of volunteers, name, and date, and review.
2. Return map to VLAWMO, as well as any unused brochures.
3. Dispose of empty paint cans in the trash, as these cannot be recycled. Return partially full cans to VLAWMO. Dispose of trash bags. You may sort natural debris from trash and dispose of accordingly. Plant debris can be disposed of as you choose. Sediment is considered trash as it contains traces of salt, metals, and oils from cars.
4. Review stenciling kit contents and return kit (minus empty paint cans) to VLAWMO. Inform VLAWMO if anything is missing. Kit should be tidy and able to close completely.
5. Be sure stencils are **completely dry** when placed back in the container!

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Contact VLAWMO at (651) 204-6070  
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# Subwatershed Map

Refer to this map when completing the Stencil Tracking Sheet

