

Storm Drain Stenciling Instructions



Why volunteer?

While most people would never intentionally pollute a lake, river, or wetland, there are many ways this happens on accident or without knowing. Human-made and even natural material on the street drains through storm drains and into water bodies.

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 carries the water directly to a lake unfiltered to a stream, wetland, or lake. Pollutants such as antifreeze, paint, automotive brake dust, cigarette butts, trash, gasoline, motor oil, or animal waste find their way into the storm sewer and harm fish, birds, frogs, and other wildlife. Natural debris such as grass clippings and leaves pose problems to water because they carry excess nutrients that cause algae blooms. Our goal is to avoid excessive, unpleasant algae blooms to keep our waters usable and protected for the future. It's much harder to improve high-nutrient water than it is to make it worse.

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 us to educate the community and make a positive impact on water resources. 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 judgment 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 to - 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.

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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 guider who warns the group and waves cars by: clear directives avoid confusion.



All participants are to watch the training video at: 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 chaperons 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 leave 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 requested!
Send to WAV@VLAWMO.ORG

Clean-up:

1. Complete the **Stencil Tracking Sheet**: number of drains stenciled, brochures distributed, sub-watersheds covered (page 3), number of volunteers, name, and date, and lbs. collected.
2. Return tracking sheet and completed 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 and debris. You may sort natural debris from trash and dispose of accordingly. By law, organic/plant debris must be composted through a yard collection service or brought to a county composting facility.
Pure road sediment is considered trash because it contains salt, metals, oil, and sand.
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. Pat wet stencils with paper towels to reduce our paint scraping. Store in separate garbage bag.

Contact VLAWMO at (651) 204-6070
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WAV@VLAWMO.ORG / OFFICE@VLAWMO.ORG

Sub-watershed Map

Refer to this map when completing the Stencil Tracking Sheet

