

What is the importance of Stormwater? / DPW Environmental Division

Whether your facility or residence is two blocks or twenty miles from the water, it has connections to local bodies of water. One such connection is storm drains. Every community is full of rooftops, paved driveways, streets, parking lots, and loading docks. These types of surfaces are known as “impervious,” meaning water (rain) cannot penetrate them. Runoff from these areas becomes stormwater runoff, which enters storm drains and is carried through a conveyance system directly (without treatment) into local waters.

As stormwater runoff travels, it picks up pollutants such as oil, grease, chemicals, dust from vehicle brakes, etc. Since runoff is not treated, anything it picks up along the way is deposited into local waters. According to the Natural Resource Defense Council, a one-acre parking lot produces 16 times more stormwater runoff than a meadow of similar size. As little as 5 percent impervious surface can harm the animals and plants living in or along natural streams because the runoff moves faster, carries more sediment, and may cause flooding during heavy rain events.

Fort Stewart/Hunter Army Airfield (FSGA/HAAF) has taken a sustainable approach to stormwater management by utilizing strategies to help minimize runoff and control the volume and frequency of stormwater discharges. However, these efforts alone are not enough to sustain our aquatic resources. Everyone living and working on the installation plays a role in preventing stormwater pollution. By implementing some of the strategies listed below, each of us can help ensure FSGA/HAAF’s aquatic ecosystem will be here for future generations of Soldiers and their Families to enjoy. Remember, clean water isn’t just good business –it’s everybody’s business.

Here are some ways you can help prevent stormwater pollution:

- Wash cars at an installation washrack for personal vehicles or an off-post car wash.
- On FSGA, personal vehicles can be washed at the washrack located on Steel Ave. (behind the Commissary) and the AAFES self-service car wash (Bldg. 431) at the corner of Bundy Ave. and W. 5th St. (There are currently no car wash facilities for personal vehicles at HAAF).
- Clean oil, grease, or chemical spills immediately and do not rinse the spill area with water.
- Periodically inspect your car for leaks and promptly repair any you find.
- Dry sweep garage floors and driveways instead of wet washing.
- Dispose of pet waste by flushing, burying, or trashing.
- Promptly pick up yard waste and bag for proper disposal.
- Use drip pans and funnels when changing fluids. Do NOT dispose of these in the woods. Recycle used oil and filters at Automotive Skills Centers on post.
- If using one of these facilities to perform an oil change, there is no additional charge for disposal of oil and filters.
- If simply dropping off for disposal, there will be a \$1/gallon fee for oil and \$1 fee for filters.

For more information on the FSGA/HAAF Stormwater Program, please visit our website. <https://home.army.mil/stewart/about/Garrison/DPW/environmental/prevention-and-compliance/water>.