

What is Dry Weather Runoff? [Introduction](#)

Action 1: What's My Watershed?



Find information about your watershed and waterway using EPA's online mapping tool.

Action 2: Drool Detectives



Find and document urban drool in your neighborhood.

Action 3: Got Drool?



Do a sprinkler check to see if you contribute to urban drool, and interview an adult about their car washing habits.

Action 4: What's in My Drool?



Take samples of urban drool near your home and test them for pollutants.

Action 5: Just Do It! Create a Catchy Slogan



Start a campaign in your neighborhood by first coming up with a slogan.

Action 6: Students In Action



Follow-through with your campaign to reduce urban drool in your neighborhood.

Dry weather runoff, also called urban drool, is the runoff you see in the gutters outside when it's **not** raining and is caused mostly from car washing in the driveway or from sprinkler overspray. It's a problem because the water running off driveways or sidewalks carries pollutants like soap and toxic dust from cars, and fertilizers from green spaces, and this pollution impacts the water quality downstream.

One of the biggest sources of urban drool is from overwatering the lawn or landscape. Not only does this waste water, but all that extra water runs into the street, where a gutter guides it right into the storm drain. Any fertilizer or pesticide used on the grass also washes into the storm drain (along with loose dirt and small bits of litter). The storm drains link up with pipes that carry the water to nearby creeks, rivers or lakes where the pollutants cause harm to people, habitats, and aquatic life.

Another common source of urban drool is car-washing in the driveway. Even when using a natural soap product, all of the dirt and brake dust that comes off the car flows into the gutter and out to waterways, unfiltered. This dirt is very harmful to people, plants and animals because it contains toxic chemicals and very fine metal dust. When you take your car to a car wash, the dirty wash water is either disposed of properly or cleaned and recycled to wash more cars.



Dry Weather Runoff Action Plan

Local governments know that urban drool can be harmful and they hire experts to help them reduce it. Students take on the role of water quality experts in the Dry Weather Runoff Action Plan as they help the city by looking for sources of urban drool in and around their school and neighborhoods. Throughout this program students will participate in six actions, where they will:

- Become informed about why urban drool is such a problem,
- Look for evidence indicating sources of urban drool,
- Conduct tests to see if there are pollutants in the runoff near their homes and school,
- Be problem solvers as they come up with ways to change the behaviors that lead to this form of water pollution.

At the end of each of these six actions, **students** will play a major role in keeping our waterways clean and healthy!