



# Preventing Pollution at Home

Stanford Water Resources and Civil Infrastructure

Stanford lies in the watersheds of San Francisquito and Matadero Creeks, which are home to unique species such as steelhead trout and the California red-legged frog. By following the pollution prevention tips below, faculty/staff residents can help protect these organisms and the health of our community. Learn more at [suwater.stanford.edu/watershed-protection](https://suwater.stanford.edu/watershed-protection).

## Garden

### Use less toxic pest control methods

Check out [ourwaterourworld.org](https://ourwaterourworld.org) for guides on controlling common pests. And visit [mywatershedwatch.org/residents/less-toxic-gardening](https://mywatershedwatch.org/residents/less-toxic-gardening) for local businesses that offer sustainable pest control products and services.

### Compost

Reduce landfill waste by putting garden clippings and food scraps in the curbside compost bin (more information at [lbre.stanford.edu/pssistanford-recycling/information/facultystaff-housing](https://lbre.stanford.edu/pssistanford-recycling/information/facultystaff-housing)). Learn how to start your own compost pile at [southbaygreengardens.org/soilsandcomposting](https://southbaygreengardens.org/soilsandcomposting).

### Capture stormwater

Slow down and absorb runoff by diverting rain spouts into your garden, installing a rain barrel, or removing concrete surfaces. Learn more at [southbaygreengardens.org/rainwater-management](https://southbaygreengardens.org/rainwater-management). Rebates for rain gardens and barrels are available at [suwater.stanford.edu/rebates](https://suwater.stanford.edu/rebates).

### Sweep, don't hose

To prevent pollutants from entering or clogging the storm drain, use a rake or broom – not a hose – to clean up garden waste and outdoor spills. If needed, use an absorbent (e.g. kitty litter or corn starch) to soak up liquid spills before disposing in the garbage.

## Automotive

### Maintain and repair your vehicle

Have your vehicle inspected and maintained regularly to prevent leaks and keep your engine burning cleanly. Repair leaks promptly.

### Recycle used motor oil and oil filters

Find drop-off sites for used motor oil, oil filters, antifreeze, tires, and car batteries at [hhw.org](https://hhw.org). Faculty/staff residents can also drop off used motor oil and oil filters at the PSSI office (learn about the Residential Universal Waste Program at [lbre.stanford.edu/pssistanford-recycling/information/facultystaff-housing](https://lbre.stanford.edu/pssistanford-recycling/information/facultystaff-housing)).

### Use alternative transportation

In addition to tailpipe emissions and leaking fluids, cars release heavy metals and microplastics from tire wear. If possible, consider walking, biking, skateboarding, scootering, carpooling, or taking transit.

### Use a commercial car wash

Commercial car washes are the best way to wash your vehicle, because their wastewater is sent to local treatment plants. At home, wash cars over unpaved surfaces so that polluted water percolates into the soil rather than entering a storm drain, then empty your bucket of soapy water into a sink or toilet. For more tips, plus discounts to local car washes, visit [mywatershedwatch.org/residents/how-do-i/learn-about-creek-friendly-car-washing](https://mywatershedwatch.org/residents/how-do-i/learn-about-creek-friendly-car-washing).

## Volunteer

### Stanford Conservation Program

Help restore habitat at the Stanford Dish. Learn more at [conservation.stanford.edu](https://conservation.stanford.edu).

## Home

### **Reduce, reuse, recycle, and repair**

Visit [lbre.stanford.edu/pssistanford-recycling](http://lbre.stanford.edu/pssistanford-recycling) for recycling information. And go to [repaircafe-paloalto.org](http://repaircafe-paloalto.org) for upcoming repair events.

### **Avoid toxic products when possible**

If you do need a toxic product, such as a cleaner, paint, or solvent, carefully follow the label's guidance on using and storing the product safely. Visit [baywise.org/residential/in-your-home](http://baywise.org/residential/in-your-home) for safer home cleaning products and [mywatershedwatch.org/residents/how-do-i/inform-a-contractor-about-pollution-prevention](http://mywatershedwatch.org/residents/how-do-i/inform-a-contractor-about-pollution-prevention) for tips on construction, painting, and maintenance activities.

### **Properly dispose hazardous waste**

Visit [hhw.org](http://hhw.org) to find drop-off sites in Santa Clara County for wastes such as:

- Household batteries\*
- Fluorescent\* and LED light bulbs
- Paint\*
- Used motor oil and oil filters\*
- Automotive batteries, tires, and antifreeze
- Refrigerators\*
- CRT displays\*
- Mercury-containing thermostats/thermometers
- Other used electronics
- Used medicine and sharps
- Unwanted cleaners

\* Faculty/staff residents can also dispose of certain items through PSSI Stanford Recycling's annual clean-up events or their Residential Universal Waste Program. Learn more at [lbre.stanford.edu/pssistanford-recycling/information/facultystaff-housing](http://lbre.stanford.edu/pssistanford-recycling/information/facultystaff-housing).

### **Avoid sewer back-ups**

Leftover cooking oil can clog the sewer system and lead to back-ups. For tips on proper disposal, visit [suwater.stanford.edu/residential-grease-disposal](http://suwater.stanford.edu/residential-grease-disposal). Additionally, only toilet paper should be flushed down the toilet. Disinfectant wipes, so-called "flushable" wipes, and other items also clog sewers.

## Other Outdoor

### **Dispose of pet waste and litter**

Pick up pet wastes and dispose in the garbage, as feces contain pathogens that harm humans and wildlife. Reduce use of single-use plastic bags and foodware, which contribute to creek pollution.

### **Keep pool water out of storm drains**

Draining pools, spas, and fountains to the storm drain can cause chlorine, copper, and sediment pollution. For tips on pool draining, visit [mywatershedwatch.org/residents/how-do-i/drain-my-pool-or-spa-water](http://mywatershedwatch.org/residents/how-do-i/drain-my-pool-or-spa-water).

## Links and Resources

### **PSSI/Stanford Recycling**

Learn about recycling, composting, and hazardous waste disposal at Stanford:

[lbre.stanford.edu/pssistanford-recycling/information/facultystaff-housing](http://lbre.stanford.edu/pssistanford-recycling/information/facultystaff-housing)

### **Santa Clara County Household Hazardous Waste Program**

Find hazardous waste drop-off sites in Santa Clara County: [hhw.org](http://hhw.org)

### **Palo Alto Regional Water Quality Control Plant**

Get pollution prevention tips from our regional wastewater treatment plant:

[cleanbay.org/residential](http://cleanbay.org/residential)

### **Santa Clara Valley Urban Runoff Pollution Prevention Program**

Discover local watershed-friendly businesses, such as pest control services and car washes:

[mywatershedwatch.org](http://mywatershedwatch.org)

### **Bay Area Pollution Prevention Site**

More pollution prevention tips: [baywise.org](http://baywise.org)

### **South Bay Green Gardens**

Learn about sustainable gardening topics, such as pest control and rainwater capture:

[southbaygreengardens.org](http://southbaygreengardens.org)