

EnviroTalk

Fall 2004

Fat-free pipes in 4 easy steps

Keeping fatty substances out of your kitchen drain pipes can save you money and protect the environment.

Vegetable oil, grease drippings and butter coat the inside of drain pipes each time they pass through, the way fatty food clogs your arteries. That buildup eventually solidifies and might clog your kitchen or side-sewer pipes beyond such remedies as liquid drain openers or metal "snakes."

Someday you might need a costly visit from the plumber to fix or replace damaged pipes.

The same greasy build up can lead to clogs in the City's sewer lines, which might cause sewage to back up into your home or to overflow into our streams and lakes. Almost half of Tacoma's sewer backups are caused by grease clogs.

To keep your pipes fat-free, follow these simple steps after cooking:

1. **Pour** any liquid oils or grease into a container.
2. **Scrape** any more fats, oils or grease into the container.
3. **Wipe** pots and pans with a paper towel before washing.
4. **Toss** the paper towel and container into the trash.

Rinse your cooking pot or pan only *after* completing Step 4. Water and soap might get grease off your pots and your hands, but it won't keep it away from your plumbing.

If you're generating large amounts of grease, for example with a turkey fryer, drop it off for free at the City's Household Hazardous Waste Facility.* Smaller amounts go in the garbage.

*Located at the Tacoma Landfill, 3510 S. Mullen St., open 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily, www.cityoftacoma.org/hazwaste.

Enviro-friendly

BACK2SCHOOL tips

As the back-to-school bells ring, keep in mind ways of making going to school a more earth-friendly experience.

When shopping for new school gear, look for non-toxic supplies and items that are reusable or made from recycled materials. For example, make sure your art supplies, such as Crayola markers, are labeled "non-toxic." Purchase a sturdy backpack that can be reused year after year, or buy paper with recycled content. Purchasing reusable items instead of disposable items saves money *and* landfill space.

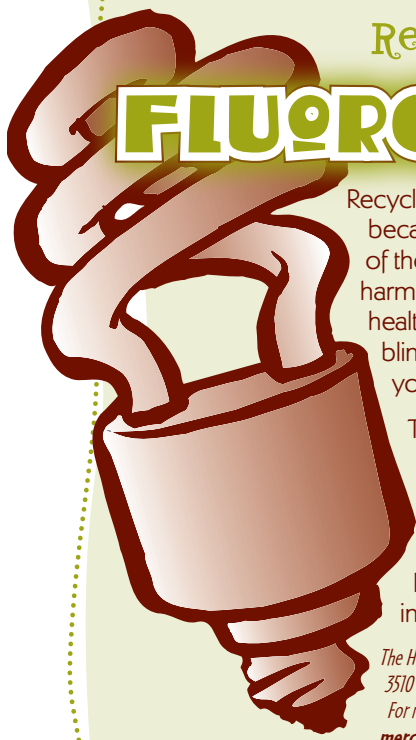
What about lunch? Did you know each student who packs a disposable lunch creates 67 pounds of waste each school year? If all students in Tacoma Public Schools brought disposable lunches, they would create more than 2 million pounds of waste in one year!

Consider these tips for packing a waste-free lunch:

- ☀ Use reusable lunchboxes.
- ☀ Use reusable containers instead of disposable plastic bags or plastic wrap.
- ☀ Use silverware instead of disposable utensils.
- ☀ Use cloth napkins instead of paper napkins.
- ☀ Pack drinks in refillable bottles instead of juice boxes or pouches.

Check out more back-to-school tips at www.cityoftacoma.org/wastefree and click on September.





Recycle your

FLUORESCENTS

Recycle fluorescent light tubes and bulbs because they contain small amounts of the toxic metal mercury. Mercury is harmful to the environment and your health, possibly causing deafness, blindness, birth defects and more if you come into contact with it.

Tacoma residents and small businesses can recycle up to 50 bulbs a year at the Household Hazardous Waste Facility. Bulbs must be intact — broken ones have already released mercury into the environment.

The Household Hazardous Waste Facility (Tacoma Landfill, 3510 S. Mullen St.) is open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily. For more information, visit www.cityoftacoma.org/mercurymatters, or call 591-5418.

City of Tacoma AccessLine 798-7272

Phone directory brings 24/7 access to City info

Want 24/7 access to City of Tacoma government? Look no further than your phone book. AccessLine, the City's new 24-hour recorded information service, provides detailed recorded messages on everything from the building permit process and electronics recycling options to the Tacoma Dome schedule and what to do about sewer backups. You'll find AccessLine near the traditional City phone listings in the blue Government Pages of your phone book. Also available at www.cityoftacoma.org/accessline.

Many CHOICES TO PUT UNWANTED ITEMS TO GOOD REUSE

Do you have perfectly good leftover items that didn't sell at your garage sale? Cleaning out your closet to make room for a new back-to-school wardrobe? Reusing items is an increasingly popular way to get rid of unwanted stuff without throwing it away.

Here are some free and convenient opportunities to put your items to good reuse.

Reusable household items, furniture, building materials

Goodwill and ReHarvest Center

Attended donation stations at the City's Recycling Center (Tacoma Landfill), 3510 S. Mullen St., 8 a.m.-6 p.m. daily

2good2toss.com

This Web site offers an easy way to buy and sell used items (from \$0 to \$99). It's free to post your unwanted items.

More than 250 tons collected since March 2003

Cell phones

Cell phones and chargers collected through the City's Old Phones, New Chances program go to help domestic violence victims.



Tacoma Public Utilities lobby

3628 S. 35th St., 7:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. M-F



Tacoma Municipal Building, 2nd floor lobby

747 Market St., 8 a.m.-5 p.m. M-F



City of Tacoma Recycling Center

3510 S. Mullen St. (Tacoma Landfill), 8 a.m.-6 p.m. daily

More than 5 tons collected since October 2003

Athletic shoes

Part of the nationwide Reuse-A-Shoe program, Nike turns Tacoma's worn out athletic shoes into sports courts, tracks and fields.

All Pierce County Goodwill donation stations



For addresses and hours, call 573-1333 or visit www.tacomagoodwill.org

More than 27 tons collected since March 2003

DRain HOT TUBS & POOLS TO THE RIGHT DRain

Hot tubs and swimming pools can be refreshing during the warmer months. As the summer winds down though, take special care when deciding if you need to empty your hot tub or pool — and where. While the water might seem clean, the chemicals used in hot tubs and pools can harm fish and wildlife.

There are several ways to protect nature from your pool and spa water:

-  Dechlorinate the water before emptying it. Neutralizing chemicals are available from pool chemical suppliers.
-  Empty the water into the sewer system by pumping it to a sink or bathtub in your house. Water released into storm drains or into the ground will go untreated into local bodies of water.

If maintained properly, your pool will not need to be emptied often. Hot tubs should be emptied every three to four months. Consult a professional pool service company before emptying your pool or hot tub yourself.

The City's surface water manual covers cleaning and maintenance for hot tubs and pools. To access the manual, visit www.cityoftacoma.org/manual and find, Volume IV, Chapter 3, Section 3.6.



Tacoma Firs Golf Center

Practice your golf game at Tacoma Firs Golf Center, which features 60 covered tee stations, an 18-hole miniature golf course, natural-grass putting green and 50-yard short practice area.

Tacoma Firs (4504 S. Tyler St.) operates under a revenue-sharing agreement with the City. www.cityoftacoma.org/solidwaste/golf, 472-6899



Solid Waste Management

3510 South Mullen St. • Tacoma, WA 98409
www.cityoftacoma.org/solidwaste

Garbage, recycling and yard waste	591-5543
Call-2-Haul	573-2468
Hazardous waste	591-5418
Scalehouse	593-7724
Recycling schedule (recorded message only)...	565-5955
Landfill hours: 8 a.m.-6 p.m. daily (except major holidays)	

Wastewater & Surface Water Management

2201 Portland Ave. • Tacoma, WA 98421
www.cityoftacoma.org/waterservices

Customer service (M-F, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.)	502-2100
Sewer backups (24 hours).....	591-5585
Storm flooding (24 hours).....	591-5585
Foss Cleanup Hotline (24 hours).....	233-1995
TAGRO	502-2150
Commencement Bay Water Pollution Hotline* (24 hours)	383-2429

All prefixes are 253

*Hotline operated in conjunction with Citizens for a Healthy Bay.

Don't leaf all the fall cleaning to us!

With autumn comes falling leaves that clog storm drains, leading to flooding problems in your neighborhood.

Help out by clearing leaves and litter from the storm drains near your home. Pay close attention to storm drains located near street corners and low areas. Remember, you may put leaves and other yard debris out with your regular yard waste pickup.

The City's crews do their best to keep more than 17,000 drains clean in Tacoma. However, they can't clear off all the autumn leaves before the rain starts. Help out by doing a little fall cleaning around your neighborhood.



'Signs' of cleaner times on the Foss

Beginning mid-August, it'll be hard to miss the red and white dredge sucking contaminated sediments from the bottom of the Thea Foss Waterway. Learn more about the City of Tacoma's Superfund cleanup from the new signs along the waterfront esplanade and at Thea's Park. For regular updates, call the City's 24-hour message line at 233-1995 or visit www.cityoftacoma.org/fosscleanup.

EnviroChallenge

- Congratulations to the winners of the last EnviroChallenge — Colette Babson, Linda Brieger, Apple C, Kevin Kreischer and Venessa Wrye. They met the challenge by naming the five H's affecting survival of salmon in the Pacific Northwest:
- Habitat degradation,
- Harvesting, Hatchery production, Hydropower and Habits.
- This issue's challenge: Name three of the many products that are made using recycled cooking oil.
- The first five Tacoma residents* who e-mail us at envirotalk@cityoftacoma.org (no answers can be taken by phone) with the correct answer will receive an Environmental Services backpack/cooler — perfect for schoolbooks or a Labor Day camping trip. Visit www.cityoftacoma.org/solidwaste to find the answer.

* Limit one winner per household, per calendar year.

Mulch away weeds

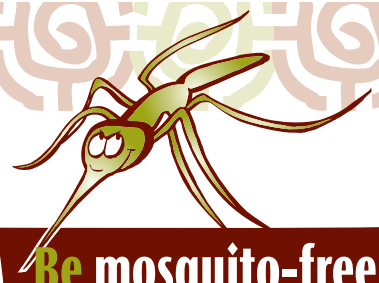
Want to drastically reduce weeding in your flower beds and gardens next spring? Want your plants to get through the winter in great shape? Then use TAGRO Mulch this fall and winter.

TAGRO Mulch is a mixture of quality Tacoma biosolids, fir and hemlock sawdust. It is designed to slowly release nutrients, helping to protect root systems and retain moisture in the soil. This reduces the need for watering and suppresses those pesky weeds. The mulch also regulates soil temperature, protecting plants from winter cold.

Use a 2-to-4-inch layer of mulch on your flower beds. This natural soil conditioner also provides an earth-friendly alternative to harmful weed killers.

TAGRO Mulch is going fast. Contact us today to reserve yours. Pick up the mulch for \$12/yard at Tacoma's Central Wastewater Treatment Plant, 2201 Portland Ave., or have it delivered. Hours: April through September: Weekdays 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturdays 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. October through March: Weekdays 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. For more information: 502-2150 or www.TAGRO.com.





Be mosquito-free using a home-made recipe

Don't let your summer plans be squashed by summer pests. Instead, prepare yourself with an earth-friendly mosquito repellent that will divert mosquitoes and the potential risk of contracting the West Nile virus.

Mix up a homemade mosquito repellent using rubbing alcohol or vodka, combined with an essential oil such as citronella, eucalyptus, rosemary, lemon grass, peppermint or lavender. Follow these easy steps:

- ☘ Use 10 drops of alcohol for every 1 drop of essential oil.
- ☘ Test the repellent on a small patch of skin first.
- ☘ Reapply often, every 30 minutes to 2 hours.
- ☘ Store in a cool, dry place for up to 1 week.

Common store-bought insect repellents containing DEET (diethylmetatoluamide) provide longer coverage and are proven to be the most effective against mosquitoes. DEET, however, should not be used on children under the age of two months, and adults should avoid using it for extended periods of time.

One of the most popular alternatives to products containing DEET is Avon Skin-So-Soft. According to researchers at the New England Journal of Medicine, Avon Skin-So-Soft only deters mosquitoes for an average of nine minutes! Homemade repellents using citronella, eucalyptus and soybean oil lasted between 20 minutes and two hours.

For more helpful recipes, visit www.cityoftacoma.org/greenercleaners.

New ENVIROKIDS Web Site

kid-tested, mother (earth) approved

Calling all kids! Did you know you can clean your desk with toothpaste? Have you ever tried looking for worms in a word search? Can you turn an egg carton into a game?

Learn about all these things and more at the City's new EnviroKids Web site: www.envirochallenger.com/envirokids.

The EnviroKids site is for kids who want to have fun and learn how to protect the earth. There are creative projects to make, games to play and contests to win. There are pop quizzes to challenge you, lists of everyday things you can do to help the environment stay healthy, and more.

Win a prize! What project can you make by reusing an old milk jug? The first five Tacoma kids (age 5-12) to correctly answer this question will win an awesome prize. Find the answer at www.envirochallenger.com/envirokids and e-mail your response to envirotalk@cityoftacoma.org.

EnviroKids is sponsored by the City's popular EnviroChallenger environmental education program. EnviroChallengers Bruno and Sarah Amber teach every day in Tacoma's public and private elementary schools.



Holiday garbage/recycling collection schedule

Labor Day: Sept. 6 on schedule

Veterans Day: Nov. 11 on schedule

Thanksgiving: Nov. 25 one day late
Nov. 26 one day late

If your regular pickup day is Thursday, Nov. 25, your pickup day will be Friday, Nov. 26. If your regular pickup day is Friday, Nov. 26, your pickup day will be Saturday, Nov. 27.

Christmas Day: Dec. 25..... on schedule

Since the holiday is on a Saturday, all garbage and recycling service is on its normal schedule.

www.cityoftacoma.org/solidwaste/calendar



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Public Works
Environmental Services
747 Market Street, Room 408
Tacoma, Washington 98402-3769

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We want your feedback and story suggestions. E-mail us at envirotalk@cityoftacoma.org.

PWK 5120 0021 (07/04)a

HATE MOSQUITOES?

SAY GOODBYE TO STANDING WATER

Don't let standing water stand in your way of a mosquito-free summer. Mosquitoes are more than just pesky. Health experts warn that in the warmer months, mosquitoes in our state might carry the West Nile virus.

What can you do? Eliminate mosquito breeding grounds around your home — typically areas of standing water. Canvass your home and garden for the places where mosquitoes most like to thrive:

- ✗ Empty extra water from flower pot saucers.
- ✗ Clean clogged gutters.
- ✗ Dispose of unused containers where water can gather — bottles, cans, buckets or old tires.
- ✗ Clean garden ponds and stock with mosquito-eating fish.
- ✗ Change the water once or twice a week in bird baths, fountains, wading pools and pets' water dishes.
- ✗ Be sure to cover pools or hot tubs that have not been drained, and empty water from pool and hot tub covers once or twice a week.

For tips on protecting yourself from mosquitoes, and for more information on the West Nile virus, visit www.cityoftacoma.org/westnilevirus.

