

## Did You Know?

- Grass clippings are 85% water and 5% nitrogen. When left on the lawn, they return water and nutrients to the soil.
- Grass clippings can provide up to 30% of your fertilizer requirements.
- For every eighth of an inch that a lawn mower blade is raised, there is a 30% increase in a grass blade's surface area improving the ability to take in water and nutrients.
- Any mower can recycle grass clippings; you don't need to purchase a special mower. Simply remove the bagging attachment. If you have trouble using your mower without the bagger, contact your dealer for assistance.
- There are "recycling" or "mulching" mowers manufactured for leaving clippings on the lawn. They are specifically designed to grind up the pieces of grass. With a bagging attachment, they can pick up the clippings when they are wet and heavy in the spring. They're also excellent for shredding and collecting leaves, which you can then add to your compost pile (see "Other Alternatives").

## EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

[www.epa.gov/npdes](http://www.epa.gov/npdes)

[www.deq.state.ne.us](http://www.deq.state.ne.us)

[www.cityofkearney.org](http://www.cityofkearney.org)

[www.nebraskapartners.fws.gov](http://www.nebraskapartners.fws.gov)

[www.stormwaterauthority.org](http://www.stormwaterauthority.org)

[www.nebraskah2o.org](http://www.nebraskah2o.org)

For more information on the City of Kearney's Stormwater Management Plan please contact:

City of Kearney  
Public Works Department  
P.O. Box 1180  
Kearney, NE 68848-1180  
Stormwater Program Manager  
Phone (308) 233-3273  
Fax (308) 233-3209

# **STORMWATER POLLUTION PREVENTION**

## **PREVENTING WATER POLLUTION**

### **PREVENTION METHODS APPLIED NOW WILL PAYOFF IN THE END**



Water Pollution Prevention Tips For The Lawn and Landscaping Industry.



## Keep grass clippings and fallen leaves off the street and other paved areas.

### Tips of Healthy Lawns and Rivers

- When you mow your yard or rake leaves, please do not allow grass clippings or leaves to blow into the street or gutter. Please take a little extra time to clean up paved areas.
- Grass clippings in the street are being washed down the storm sewers and will end up in area lakes and rivers where they have the potential to cause algae blooms.
- Mowing into the street is a **VIOLATION** of the City of Kearney Ordinances. A violation that may result in legal action.



- Grass clippings contain phosphorous, the nutrient that turns lakes green with algae.
- One bushel of fresh grass clippings can contain 0.1 lbs of phosphorous-enough to produce 30-50 lbs of

algae growth if it finds its way to a lake or river.

- When mowing, grass clippings should be directed away from the street, driveways, sidewalks, or other paved areas. Curbside storm sewers can transport grass clippings (along with other debris) to nearby lakes, rivers and wetlands.

### TIPS TO HELP YOU “LEAVE IT ON THE LAWN”

- Regular mowing with a sharp blade set at the proper height keeps grass growing vigorously so it covers the soil surface. Grass clippings can be left on your lawn when it is mowed regularly at the recommended height.
- For most lawns, a grass height of two to three inches provides good quality turf. Continually scalping turf seriously weakens grass plants and incites pests and weeds.
- During the summer, raise the mower blade 1/2 “ to help your lawn tolerate stress. Taller grass screens light from the soil surface, providing some weed control.
- When grass has grown very tall, it’s better to lower the cutting height gradually, rather than cutting back all at once to avoid unnecessary stress on the plants.
- Leave grass clippings on your lawn whenever possible. They won’t

contribute significantly to thatch build-up. As they decompose, they’re a valuable organic source of nutrients, especially nitrogen. In fact, yearly nitrogen applications may be reduced 1/3 to 1/2 when grass clippings are returned to the lawn.

- Mulching mowers and mulching attachments for standard power mowers can reduce clipping size increasing the rate of decomposition. Removing about an inch of grass blade usually produces clippings that decompose fairly quickly.
- It reduces costs of having to pay for a refuse bin to be removed weekly. Also, it eliminates the time and cost of having to drive to the dump to throw out the grass clippings.

### Other Alternatives:

**Mulch:** Grass clippings can provide effective mulch around garden plants and between rows of flowers, vegetables, and small fruits. Mulching helps to reduce weeds, conserve moisture, and modify the soil temperature. However, care should be taken to avoid mulching too thickly.

**Backyard Compost:** Add clippings to your compost pile, they are an excellent source of nitrogen. When composting grass clippings, it is advisable to mix them with other yard wastes such as leaves or wood chips as a bulking agent to increase free air space.

*\*Reprinted from: “Recommended Mowing Techniques” Minnesota Department of Agriculture*