

Section 50.09 of the Port St. Lucie Code of Ordinances makes it unlawful to deposit grass clippings or yard waste in the street or storm drains.

The principal reasons for this prohibition are:

- Grass clippings that are blown or left in the street or storm drains adversely affect the quality of water downstream
- Grass clippings and yard waste can also clog drainage pipes and cause localized flooding

If you violate this ordinance, you may be required to appear before the Special Magistrate or be subject to a written Uniform Code Citation.

### Grass clippings and yard waste pollute

Grass clippings and tree leaves are considered a source of pollution when washed or blown into storm drains.

Too many grass clippings and leaves can cloud the water and block sunlight that is essential to aquatic life.

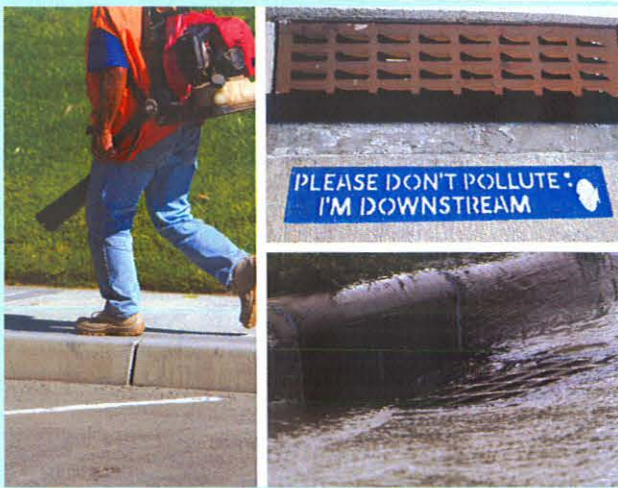
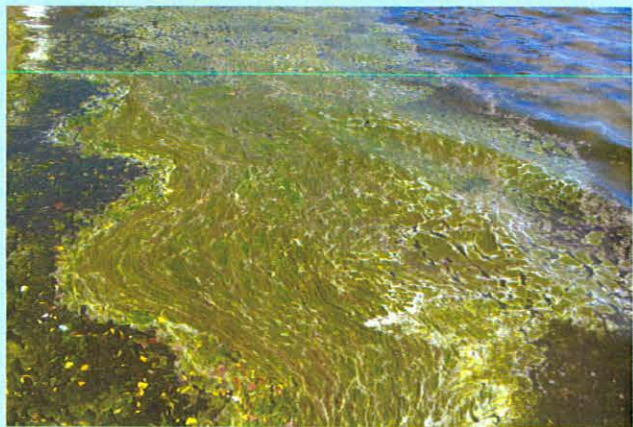
When grass clippings and leaves decompose, they release high levels of nutrients. These excess nutrients can cause algae blooms in our rivers (*pictured below*).

When the alga dies, it reduces the oxygen in the water, thus harming aquatic life.

### Proper grass clipping practices

Grass clippings should be blown back onto the lawn. These grass clippings are high in nutrient value. These nutrients will be returned in time to the lawn.

The return of grass clippings to the lawn is the same as applying small amounts of fertilizer continuously with no risk of creating a thatch problem.



### Storm Water Management Plan

As of 2003, the Federal Government has mandated that cities develop and implement a Storm Water Management Plan (SWMP). Part of the city's SWMP is to educate businesses on stormwater runoff pollution and the best management practices that they can use to reduce runoff pollution to the maximum extent practicable.

This brochure is one way that we are getting this educational material in the hands of lawn maintenance professionals.

#### What are storm drains?

Storm drains are found on city streets along the curb. They are on the side of major roads, parking lots, commercial developments and select neighborhoods. Storm drains are holes or openings, usually with a grate over them, leading to underground pipes which carry water, usually to a pond, lake, or canal, which in turn channel the run off to the North Fork of the St. Lucie River.

#### Only rain down the drain

Water that enters the storm system goes directly to our river—there are no treatment plants along the way. The only treatment the water will receive to remove pollutants is by plant life absorbing the nutrients it is carrying, or by retaining/detaining this water in ponds where pollutant-laden sediment has a chance to settle before it is released into the river.

Do not discard any waste down the storm drains.

# PROPER GRASS CLIPPING PRACTICES

Important information for  
Lawn Maintenance Professionals



*It is a violation of City Code to deposit grass clippings or yard waste in the street or storm drains.*

*—Code of Ordinances, Section 50.09*

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

**(772) 344-4128**

**[www.cityofpsl.com/npdes](http://www.cityofpsl.com/npdes)**