



PET WASTE FAQs

GENERAL

Q: Why should I pick it up (even if it's on my own property)?

A: Pathogens in pet waste are harmful to the health of humans, animals, and the environment.

Public property: Local animal ordinances declare it is unlawful to leave pet waste on public property and require its immediate removal.

Private property: Local water quality and health ordinances also apply to private property and could result in enforcement, including fines, if it can be determined that pet waste and/or pathogens from a property are being washed into storm drains or waterways, or if the accumulation of waste is a nuisance or a menace to health.

DISPOSAL

Q: How should I dispose of pet waste?

A: SCOOP THE POOP, BAG IT, AND PUT IT IN THE TRASH (GARBAGE).

Q: Can I put pet waste in the trash (garbage)?

A: Yes, this is the preferred disposal method. Bagging pet waste and putting it in the trash prevents the waste from becoming a source of pollution in our streams, rivers, lakes and other waterways. Landfills are designed to safely handle substances such as dog waste, cat litter, and dirty diapers.

Many people already place their dog waste in the trash because it's convenient. Some hide it in the trashcan because they think it's prohibited. Don't worry! It's allowed—please put pet waste in a bag before placing it in the trash. If you are already placing it in the trash, keep up the good work!

Q: Can I bury or compost pet waste?

A: Composting and burial do not kill hazardous pathogens that might be lurking in pet waste. Pathogens can hitchhike in surface water (aka stormwater) or find other sneaky ways into our streams, rivers and lakes.

Extended exposure at 140-degree temperatures is required to kill E. coli and Salmonella. Most home compost piles don't reach temperatures sufficient to kill many hazardous pathogens.

Giardia can survive temperature extremes, chlorination, and drying. Cryptosporidium, Leptospira, Salmonella, and E. coli can survive for months in feces or soil. Roundworms can survive for four years in soil.

Even commercial yard waste processors do not currently compost waste at temperatures sufficient to kill many pathogens in pet waste, so **please do not** put pet waste in yard waste bins for curbside pickup.

Remember: Landfills are designed to safely handle substances such as dog waste, cat litter, and dirty diapers . . . our yards and play areas are not.

Q: Can I flush pet waste down the toilet?

A: No. The recommended 3-step method of pet waste disposal in the City of Enumclaw is

- 1. PICK IT UP**
- 2. PUT IT IN A BAG**
- 3. PLACE IT IN THE TRASH**

Q: How about pet waste digesters and doggie septic systems?

A: Not a good idea. Commercially produced pet waste digesters are no better than burial, since they essentially function like broken septic systems. There is evidence that these systems often do not function properly. Even manufacturers say that they do not function properly where water tables are high (such as areas in Enumclaw), in low temperatures, and in some soil types common to our area. Manufacturers also say that the systems don't work as well when used with dog foods containing high ash levels, which are common in many low-cost dog foods. Even assuming these devices function as designed, there is little, if any, evidence that they treat waste sufficiently



to meet desired standards.

Plus, the devices are an added expense to the homeowner (typically \$25-\$60 for the device and \$14 annually for "digester"), require installation, and require frequent maintenance (some recommend daily addition of water and "digester" every few days). Our advice: bag it and place it in the trash. It's cheaper, easier, and safer.

ENVIRONMENTAL

Q: Isn't pet waste "biodegradable" or "natural"?

A: Pet waste is biodegradable in that it decomposes under natural conditions, but the harmful bacteria, viruses, and parasites in it can continue to live on even though the waste pile seems to have disappeared. When pet waste is washed into streams or bays, the waste decomposes, using up the oxygen in the water and releasing ammonia. Under those conditions and warm water temperatures, fish and other aquatic life can be killed. Pet waste also contains nutrients that encourage weed and algae growth.

Q: Why can't I use it as fertilizer?

A: Pet waste contains bacteria, viruses, and parasites that are harmful to the health of humans, animals, and the environment. Some of these pathogens can live in the soil for four years.

Q: Isn't landfilling bad? Shouldn't we do things more naturally?

A: We certainly want to reduce our waste stream to landfills wherever possible. When it comes to pet waste, however, there is currently no better alternative. There is nothing "natural" about the concentrated number of dogs in urban and suburban areas. Native wildlife populations do not reach that density. The question, then, is how we deal with the waste produced by this unnatural concentration of animals?

Burial, composting, waste digesters, and letting it lay in yards can contaminate water and jeopardizes human and pet health. Flushing is not recommended in the City of Enumclaw. At some point in the future, commercial composting technology may be sufficient to treat pet waste, enabling curbside pickup along with yard waste. Until then, landfilling is the best alternative for pet waste. **Composting is good for yard waste and bad for pet waste.**

Q: The stormwater in my neighborhood goes to a pond and swale (shallow grassy ditch). Isn't it treated there?

A: No. Dog waste is raw sewage. Stormwater ponds and swales are not designed to treat the pathogens in raw sewage.

Stormwater is not treated at a sewage treatment plant. The stormwater from ponds is released into pipes and ditches that discharge directly to streams and bays.

Ponds and swales do help clean stormwater by providing an opportunity for sediments, and any pollutants that are bound to them, to settle out; however, pathogens that remain suspended or picked up by surface water in rainy weather are discharged directly into streams, rivers, lakes and other waterways without further treatment.

HEALTH

Q: How can pet waste harm humans?

A: Pet waste contains many harmful pathogens which can cause mild distress to serious diseases. The following table provides more information.

FAQs: With appreciation to the City of Federal Way, Snohomish County and the City of Poulsbo



HAZARDOUS ORGANISMS FOUND IN PET WASTE

Organism	Common Name	Survival / Human Disease
<i>Toxocaracanis</i>	Roundworms	Survival: 4 years in soil. Human Disease: VLM (visceral larva migrans) or toxocariasis, an infection caused by certain parasites, leading to enlargement of the liver (hepatomegaly), inflammation of the middle muscular layer of the heart wall (myocarditis), inflammation of the kidneys (nephritis), inflammation of the lungs (pneumonitis), and blindness. Usually in children, but can occur in adults.
<i>Baylisascaris procyonis</i> (<i>g. Toxocara</i>)	Roundworms	Survival: Eggs can survive in moist soil for years. Human Disease: Severe neurological form of VLM (visceral larva migrans, see above), especially in young children.
<i>Ancylostoma spp.</i>	Hookworms	Survival: Several days. No known effective chemical or pesticide. Prompt removal of dog and cat feces greatly reduces risk of infection Human Disease: Spreading lesions and severe itching (pruritis). In rare instances can cause symptoms like VLM (see above). Puppies are a significant source of infection.
<i>Cryptosporidium parvum</i>	none	Survival: At least 6 months. Susceptible to drying. Human Disease: Self-limiting inflammation of the lining membrane of the stomach and the intestines (gastroenteritis), protracted in susceptible individuals. CDC reports 300,000 cases annually, 90% of waterborne origin.
<i>Campylobacter spp.</i>	none	Survival: Rapidly killed by heat, drying, and freezing. Human Disease: Mild to severe, bloody diarrhea.
<i>Escherichia coli</i>	<i>E. coli</i> , Fecal coliform bacteria	Survival: Up to 4 months in ruminant (cattle) feces. Extended exposure (i.e., 3 days) at 140°F required to kill organism. Human Disease: Bloody diarrhea, severe cramps, blood clots in the kidney (hemolytic uremic syndrome or HUS), leading to kidney failure.
<i>Giardia duodenalis lamblia</i> (<i>Giardia intestinalis</i>)	<i>Giardia</i> , Giardiasis	Survival: Resistant to drying, chlorination, and temperature extremes. Can survive for months in water. Relatively persistent during wastewater treatment. Human Disease: Diarrhea, cramps, gas (flatulence), nausea, an excess of fat in stools (steatorrhea). Can be protracted and debilitating. CDC estimates 2 million cases in U.S., 90% of waterborne origin.
<i>Salmonella spp.</i>	none	Survival: Up to 6 months in cattle feces. Extended exposure at 140°F required to kill organism. Human Disease: Usually, mild inflammation of the lining membrane of the stomach and the intestines (gastroenteritis) within 6-48 hours.
<i>Brucella spp.</i>	Brucellosis	Survival: 2½ months in moist soil. Rapidly killed by direct sunlight exposure. Human Disease: Weakness, extreme exhaustion on slight effort, night sweats, chills, remittent fever, and generalized aches and pains appear in days to months. Can be protracted and extremely debilitating. Uncommon in U.S.
<i>Yersinia enterocolitica</i>	none	Survival: Unknown. Human Disease: Mild inflammation of the lining membrane of the stomach and the intestines (gastroenteritis).
<i>Leptospira interrogans</i>	Leptospirosis	Survival: Weeks to months in soil or water. Human Disease: Usually mild fever but complications can be serious, including inflammation of the liver (hepatitis), interference with normal production and discharge of bile (jaundice), inflammation of the membranes that envelop the brain and spinal cord (meningitis), and kidney failure. Life threatening, but uncommon. There has been a recent increase in the numbers of dogs with leptospires.

Above table with appreciation to the City of Federal Way, Snohomish County and the City of Poulsbo



REGULATORY REFERENCES & RESOURCES

City of Enumclaw Municipal Code References Related to Pet Waste (not intended as an exhaustive reference list)

Title 8 Health and Sanitation

Chapter 8.12 Garbage

Section 8.12.020 Definitions

Section 8.12.030 Removal – Duty

Section 8.12.250 Penalty for violation

Title 14 Utilities

Chapter 14.10 Stormwater Management

Section 14.10.015 Definitions [in part]

Section 14.10.030 Protection of System

Section 14.10.095 Illicit Discharge

Visit <http://www.codepublishing.com/WA/Enumclaw/> for a full version of the Enumclaw Municipal Code

Keeping pollutants out of municipal water systems

Many urban areas that collect stormwater runoff in municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s) are required to have a permit under the federal Clean Water Act (<https://www.epa.gov/laws-regulations/summary-clean-water-act>). The City of Enumclaw's entire stormwater system is categorized as an MS4 and is permitted under the Western Washington Phase II Municipal Stormwater Permit. The permit is administered by the Washington State Department of Ecology.

In Washington State, the Department of Ecology develops and administers National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES - a section of the Clean Water Act) municipal stormwater permits. (Source <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/>)

Other Resources

- Link to the Western Washington Phase II Municipal Stormwater Permit (the City of Enumclaw is a Phase II permittee)
<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/stormwater/municipal/phaseIIww/wwphiipermmit.html>
- Link to the Stormwater Management Manual for Western Washington
http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/stormwater/manual/2014SWMMWWinteractive/2014%20SWMMWW.htm#Topics/TitlePage2014.htm%3FTocPath%3D2014%2520SWMMWW%7C_0