

Dover's Stormwater Management Bylaw:

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Stormwater Management Bylaw?

The Dover Stormwater Management Bylaw is a local law that protects Dover's health, safety, and environment by preventing pollution, flooding, and erosion caused by stormwater runoff. It requires property owners and developers to responsibly manage rainwater and keep pollutants out of storm drains and waterways.

Why does Dover need this bylaw?

When rainwater runs off roofs, roads, and construction sites, it can carry dirt, oil, and chemicals into Dover's wetlands and streams. The bylaw helps reduce pollution, protect wildlife, and prevent costly flooding and property damage.

Who enforces the bylaw?

The Department of Public Works (DPW) serves as Dover's Stormwater Authority and enforces the rules under the oversight of the Board of Selectmen.

When do I need a stormwater permit or plan?

You need a permit or approved plan if your project will:

- Disturb more than 5,500 square feet of land, or

- Affect more than 25% of your lot, whichever is smaller.

This includes activities like clearing land, grading, building additions, or removing multiple trees.

What are “Protected Trees”?

Any tree with a diameter of 6 inches or more (measured 4.5 feet above ground). Protected trees within required yard setbacks must be preserved or replaced if removed.

What happens if I remove a protected tree?

You must either:

- Replant new trees (½" caliper for every 1" removed),
 - Contribute to Dover’s Tree Fund, or
 - Use a combination of both.
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What activities are prohibited?

You cannot:

- Dump oil, paint, soap, lawn chemicals, or yard waste into drains or ditches.
- Connect indoor plumbing or septic systems to storm drains.
- Alter or block the storm drainage system without approval.

Some discharges — like firefighting water, natural springs, or sump pumps — are allowed if they don’t cause pollution.

What are the penalties for violations?

Ignoring the bylaw can result in:

- Fines up to \$250 per day,
 - Stop-work orders,
 - Cleanup costs, and
 - Property liens for unpaid penalties.
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Why are trees part of a stormwater bylaw?


Trees naturally absorb rainwater and help prevent erosion and flooding. Protecting trees is one of the simplest and most effective ways to manage stormwater naturally.


[Visit the Tree Preservation Committee webpage](#)

[View the 2024 Town Meeting Presentation on Stormwater Bylaw](#)

Where can I learn more or get help?

Contact the Dover Department of Public Works (DPW) for guidance:

 2 Dedham Street, Dover, MA

 508-785-0058

 www.doverma.gov/stormwater