

TOWN of CARY

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Storm Drains

Storm Drains

The next set of questions examined the respondent's knowledge of materials that are acceptable to be placed in storm drains (Table 61). Rainwater is the only acceptable material that can enter storm drains. The items the respondents deemed most acceptable for the storm drains were rainwater from a home's gutters (87.6%), runoff from sprinklers/irrigation systems (68.1%), rinse water from washing a car (49.6%), and water from draining a swimming pool (28.1%). Again, since only rainwater from a home's gutters would be correct, there is a significant degree of inaccuracy in the respondent's perceptions.

On the positive side, these numbers represent an improvement from 2004 (Table 62). In 2004, 84.5% believed runoff from a sprinkler/irrigation system was acceptable for storm drains compared to 68.1% this year. In addition in 2004, 63.1% believed rinse water from washing a car was acceptable material compared to 49.6% this year. Grass clippings, leaves, and other natural vegetation has also improved from 17.5% compared to 6.5% this year. The water from draining a swimming pool remains unchanged at 28.1%.

Overall, public knowledge of what is acceptable to go into storm drains has improved this year. Even though the numbers are better, there are still concerns about the continued higher percentages for runoff from sprinklers and irrigation systems (68.1%), rinse water from washing a car (49.6%), and water from draining a swimming pool (28.1%).

Table 61. Acceptable Materials for Storm Drains - 2006.

Materials	% Yes	% No	% Not Sure
Rainwater from a home's gutters	87.6	9.5	3.0
Runoff from sprinklers and irrigation systems	68.1	23.7	8.2
Rinse water from washing a car	49.6	39.4	11.0
Water from draining a swimming pool	28.1	55.5	16.4
Grass clippings, leaves, and other natural vegetation	6.5	89.6	4.0
Grease and oil	1.2	97.5	1.2
Paint	1.0	98.0	1.0

Table 62. Acceptable Materials for Storm Drains - 2004.

Materials	% Yes	% No	% Not Sure
Rainwater from a home's gutters	88.7	8.0	3.4
Runoff from sprinklers and irrigation systems	84.5	11.7	3.9
Rinse water from washing a car	63.1	25.3	11.6

Water from draining a swimming pool	28.1	55.7	16.2
Grass clippings, leaves, and other natural vegetation	17.5	74.0	8.5
Grease and oil	0.8	98.5	0.8
Paint	0.3	99.0	0.8

The respondents were then asked what they believed happened to the materials that make it into the storm drains (Table 63). There was a relatively high amount of uncertainty among the sample. Many respondents accurately identified that the “materials go directly into area streams and creeks” (37.6%). However, a relatively large percentage were “not sure” where the materials end up (30.1%). In addition, 29.4% inaccurately believed the “materials go into the wastewater treatment plant” and 3.0% believed “materials go into a large basin that is cleaned out by Town crews.” Overall, the respondents are actually somewhat less accurate this year about what happens to the materials that make it into the storm drains. The respondents who inaccurately identified “materials go into the wastewater treatment plant” has increased from 19.3% to 29.4% this year. This year 62.4% were inaccurate in their assessments of what happens to the materials compared to 61.1% in 2004 (Table 64).

Table 63. What Happens to Materials That Do Make It into Storm Drains - 2006.

Year	Materials go into a large basin that is cleaned out by Town crews	Materials go to the wastewater treatment plant	Materials go directly into area streams and creeks	Not Sure
06	3.0	29.4	37.6	30.1

Table 64. What Happens to Materials That Do Make It into Storm Drains - 2004.

Year	Materials go into a large basin that is cleaned out by Town crews	Materials go to the wastewater treatment plant	Materials go directly into area streams and creeks	Not Sure
04	4.7	19.3	38.9	37.1

Storm Drains Crosstabulations

The crosstabulations for acceptable materials were conducted for housing type, years in Cary, and zip code (Tables B376-B378). All the groups inaccurately gave very high “yes” percentages for sprinkler/ irrigation and for rinse water from washing a car. Water from swimming pools generally received “yes” percentages in the 20%-40% range. One unusually high number was the 17.5% for grass, leaves, and natural vegetation for the 27519 zip code. However, the accuracy for grease, oil, and paints were very good.

The crosstabulations for what happens to materials that make it into storm drains are shown in Tables B379-B381. The respondents who were most accurate in selecting that materials in storm drains go directly into streams and creeks were 6-10 year residents (51.3% correct), 27513 zip code (43.6% correct), and single family households (41.3% correct). In terms of inaccurate perceptions, there was a very high percentage of townhouse/condo residents (44.1%) and 27519 zip code (42.9%) respondents who believed the materials in storm drains go to a wastewater treatment plant.



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