MOWING GUIDANCE

If you have a lawn, then you know that mowing is an inevitable activity of the warmer months. But did you know that where your grass clippings end up can have a lot to do with water quality?

Grass clippings are very high in nitrogen and phosphorus - which act as a great fertilizer if left on your lawn. But if grass clippings end up in our streams, by getting into the storm drain or being blown into the street, they will pollute our water.

This factsheet describes good house-keeping practices to use in order to minimize the chance that grass clippings will get into the storm drain system. These techniques will protect water quality and enhance quality of life in the borough.

Pollution Prevention Techniques

- Using a mulching mower or running over the clippings a second time with the mower will create smaller clippings.
- When you leave grass clippings on the lawn they decompose quickly and release valuable nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus) back into the lawn.
- If you bag your grass clippings, compost or dispose of them at an approved facility. Do not dispose into waterways or storm drains because that can lead to polluted waterways and flooding.

Keep in Mind

- Allowing grass clippings to get into the storm drain system, *as shown on the left*, is considered littering.
- Grass clippings (and other landscape waste like leaves) can clog the storm drain and pipes, leading to flooding events, or get into the waterway where they will pollute the water and cause harm.
- If any grass gets into the street or near the storm drain, remove it immediately. Your best option is to blow it back onto the lawn to act as a natural fertilizer.
- When grass clippings pool with stagnant water collected in the storm drain system it can become a breeding ground for mosquitos. Another reason to keep clippings on your lawn, NOT in the street or storm drain system.