

## How to Conduct a Storm Drain Marking Project

The storm drain marking project has three main components:

- Recording debris found at a storm drain
- Gluing a marker to selected storm drains
- Distributing door hangers which inform citizens of their impact on water quality

A kit is available from the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) with further information, sample documents, and supplies. MDEQ personnel may assist you in getting your project underway.

### Advance Preparation (Before the Project Day)

1. Six to eight weeks before the project begins, obtain written and signed permission from the county, town, or city department that maintains the storm drains in your community (usually the city public works department or the mayor's office, or the state highway department). Provide them with the following information:

**WHO?** Who is involved in the project and who is supervising it?

**WHAT?** What will you be doing? What do the markers look like? What information do the door hangers convey? (Include samples, if possible.)

**WHERE?** What particular area or neighborhood would you like to mark?

**WHEN?** When is the project going to take place? What is your rain date? What is your deadline for project approval?

**WHY?** What is the purpose of your project? (To inform citizens that polluted runoff carried from city streets, residential yards, driveways, and parking lots drains directly to streams and other water bodies so residents can take action to protect our waters.)

2. If necessary, follow up with a letter or phone call to the authorities. If you are interested in marking on federal or private property (e.g., a restaurant parking lot), be sure to get permission from the appropriate federal authority or landowner.



3. Ask local businesses and civic groups to support your project. Community groups may be able to publicize your event or recruit volunteers for you. Businesses may donate refreshments, printing, publicity or money.

4. Once you have obtained permission for the project, send a request for supplies to MDEQ.

5. Design and distribute a flyer to alert neighborhood residents about the project and educate them about polluted runoff. Include information on when, where, and why you are doing the storm drain marking, as well as the name and phone number of the project leader. Remember to acknowledge in the flyer any businesses or individuals that have made donations to your project.

6. Contact local newspapers and radio stations about your project. Newspaper coverage would greatly increase the impact of your project! Can you get TV coverage as well? A sample press release and radio announcement are available in the kit.

## The Day of the Project

### Debris Recording

1. MDEQ is building a database with information on storm drain contaminants. We need your help! Please use the record cards (provided by MDEQ) to record the pollutants found at each storm drain and mail back to MDEQ at the conclusion of the project. This information will help us keep track of the number of storm drains marked, their locations and the pollutants found near them.

### Marking Storm Drains

1. You will need two to three people per storm drain. The data collection and the cleaning of the storm drain should take 5-10 minutes per drain.

2. If the participants in your project are youths, we recommend one adult chaperone per four youths, and at least one supervisor present with any group at a storm drain. Orange safety cones should be placed on the edge of the road to alert motorists that workers are present. Wear orange vests if possible. These may be borrowed from schools, the city or county.

3. Ideally, the temperature should be between 60° and 80° F, and the drain should be dry. Don't install markers when the temperature is below 40° F.

4. To prepare the storm drain for marking, sweep off a flat area where the marker will be applied. Use a wire brush to loosen rust/dirt. Sweep freed particles away from the application surface. The surface must be clean, dry, and free of loose debris. Remove any foreign material like debris, old paint, and oil because this will affect the adhesion of the epoxy. The resulting flat, clean surface is now ready for the application of the storm drain marker.



5. Apply the epoxy (provided) in a spiral on the back of the storm drain marker. Start 1/8 inch in from the outside edge and apply an even bead around the entire edge and then work to the center. (Wear latex gloves and do not expose the epoxy to heat, sparks, your skin, your eyes, or your nose. Avoid breathing the vapors of the epoxy.)

6. Place the marker on the prepared surface. Push down hard with a twisting motion forcing epoxy out from the edge. It is important that the entire edge of the marker is sealed to the application surface.

7. Wash any skin that comes in contact with the epoxy with soap and water, or wipes. Clean up any spills. Stray epoxy on the face of the marker can be removed with GOOP® or a similar hand cleaner.

### Neighborhood Door Hanger Distribution

An important component of this project is the distribution of the door hangers to all the houses/businesses in the area surrounding the storm drain. Pairs of workers should go door to door to review the information on the door hanger with the residents. If no one answers, leave the door hanger on the front door. Workers should tell residents who is doing the project, why it is being done, and solicit their support in reducing polluted runoff.



### Follow-up Visit to Neighborhood

Two to four weeks after the markers have been installed, revisit the storm drains to see if they are noticeably cleaner. Prepare a short report summarizing your findings and mail to MDEQ's Nonpoint Source Program at the address on the back of this brochure.

## Materials List

### For Debris Recording

- Debris data cards (MDEQ)
- Pencils/pens
- Clipboard
- Trash bags
- Protective gloves

### For Storm Drain Marking

- Bucket (to carry supplies)
- Storm drain markers and special adhesive (MDEQ will supply to non-NPDES groups)
- Paper towels or rags
- Small trash bags
- Soap and water (or wipes, or commercial hand cleaner)
- Wisk broom
- Wire brush
- Orange safety vests
- Orange safety cones



### For Resident Education

- Flyers for pre-project distribution
- Door hangers (MDEQ)

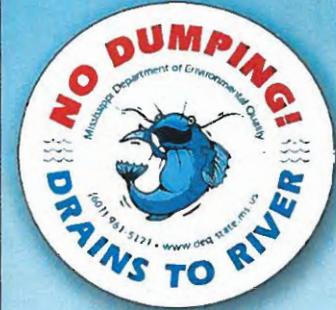
Nonpoint Source Program  
Watershed Management Branch  
Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality  
P.O. Box 10385  
Jackson, MS 39289-0385

601-961-5171

This document explains one program to address the problem of polluted runoff and was financed in part through a grant from the US Environmental Protection Agency to the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality under the provisions of Sections 319h of the Clean Water Act.

Mississippi of ENVIRONMENTAL  
Department of QUALITY

## How to Conduct a Storm Drain Marking Project



Bringing pollution awareness to our neighborhoods

**MDEQ** strives to preserve and protect Mississippi's air, land, and water through fair and responsible regulation.



P.O. Box 10385  
Jackson, MS 39289-0385  
1.800.786.0661  
www.deq.state.ms.us