



MS4 Permit No. WI-S050075-3

Section 2.6.5d. Leaf Collection and Grass Clipping Management Program

March 2023

Summary

The City of Watertown is covered under the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' (WDNR) Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System Permit No. WI-S050075-3. The City developed MS4 permit compliance programs after the initial MS4 Permit issuance in 2006. Subsequent permit reissuances have increased the requirements to minimize the amount of pollution that reaches local waterways through urban storm water runoff.

The City of Watertown implements a municipal leaf collection program to prevent leaves from clogging storm sewer inlets and pipes, and to reduce the amount of leaf debris and phosphorus that enters the storm sewer system as a result of leaves litter during fall. The City also implements a program to reduce the amount of grass clippings that enter the local storm inlets and system during the growing season. The program to control leaves and grass clippings includes detailed information to meet Section 2.6.5.d of the MS4 Permit. The removal of leaf litter and grass clippings from the streets and curbs reduces the overall amount of Total Phosphorus (TP) that reaches the Rock River, Silver Creek, Silver Creek Pond, Lake Victoria, Heiden Pond, and other local tributaries and wetlands.

Equipment & Frequency

Residents are instructed to place leaves in paper bags or rake loose leaves onto the terrace during the fall, allowing City crews with trucks and pull-behind trailers to easily collect the leaves. The City's Johnston vacuum assisted street sweeper is operated in the same quadrants as the leaf collection equipment after the leaves are picked up. The City's street sweeper follow-up in these areas to collect smaller leaf particles that typically get left behind. This process helps to prevent clogging of storm inlets and to minimize the amount of phosphorus getting into the storm sewer system as a result of decomposing leaves.

The Street Division typically collects grass and yard waste between April and November. Brush 4 feet or longer, up to 8 inches in diameter can be placed near the road for City crews to pick up or can be dropped off at the Yard Waste Site. The Street Division typically collects leaves between early/mid-October until snowfall or the majority of the leaves have fallen, usually in November. City residents are able to contact the Street Division for available for as-needed yard-waste collections during winter months.

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Location

The City has been divided into 4 quadrants for grass clipping, yard waste, and leaf collection purposes. (See *attached map*.) Collected leaves are disposed of at the Yard Waste Site on Boomer Street to be turned into compost. The City's compost site is permitted through WDNR and is managed per that permit. Compost that was made of decomposed leaves is available to residents for free for use in home landscaping projects. Brush that is 4 feet or longer and up to 8 inches in diameter can be dropped off at the Yard Waste Site for eventual chipping for future reuse. Compost and woodchips produced at the Yard Waste Site is available for residents to pick up and reuse in home landscaping projects. (See *SWPPP for Yard-Waste Site*) In addition, the Watertown Municipal Airport (Airport) has an active mowing and grass clipping program to deter wildlife from occupying the Airport and becoming a problem for aircraft.

Outreach

General information regarding the importance of proper leaf and grass clipping is shared on the City's website https://www.ci.watertown.wi.us/departments/stormwater_information.php, on the Rock River Stormwater Group website <https://protectwiwaterways.org/learn-about-stormwater/stormwater-around-your-home/> and in other brochures and newsletters throughout the year. (See *Stormwater Education Program*)

Specific instructions for residents on the City's leaf collection program and the brush pick up program are included on the City website and the in semi-annual City Connection newsletter. Additional information about on-site reuse of leaves and grass clippings is included in these sources, as well as information about the compost and wood chips that can be picked up for free at the City's Yard Waste Site for reuse in residential landscaping projects.

Tracking and Reporting

The amount of leaves collected each year is tracked and reported to WDNR in the MS4 Permit Annual Report. Information on the leaves that are in the composting process is also tracked and reported to WDNR through the compost site permit. Approximately 1,055 tons of leaves were collected in the City in 2020.

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