

# WHY SCOOP THE POOP?

**Picking up pet waste can be one of the least fun parts about owning a pet! But, leaving it on the ground can not only be a nuisance to the public, it can also be detrimental to water quality. And it is illegal in the City of Columbia and Richland County.**



Recent studies by the Environmental Protection Agency show that pet waste is one of the major sources of municipal non-point source pollution. Dog waste contains hazardous bacteria, viruses and parasites that are washed into storm drains after rain storms. Most storm drains lead straight to local waterways without being treated, so these hazardous materials end up in

our rivers and streams, making it unsafe to fish and swim. It is especially important to pick up pet waste on an impervious surface such as a sidewalk or road.

## Is dog waste a fertilizer?

Although yards are a pervious surface and many people believe the dog waste will decompose and fertilize the yard, this is not always the case. Yards typically have very compact soil due to the amount of activity on them and they act as a semi-pervious surface, which means that some of the waste will likely wash away. Other waste fertilizers, such as cow manure, have been treated with very high temperatures, which kills the bacteria and makes it safe for application. Bacteria can live in pet waste for several months, so just because it is dry does not mean it is safe. Additionally, pet waste is high in nitrates and concentrated piles of it can “burn” your grass. Properly disposing of your dog’s waste is important for public health and doesn’t have to be a burdensome task. Here are several options for disposing of pet waste.

## Plastic Bags:

If you commonly walk your dog, using a dog waste bag is an easy way of taking care of your dog’s business while out on the trail. There are many commercial products available, many of which allow you to clip a dispenser onto the dog’s leash. All you need to do is bag it and trash it. Biodegradable versions of these bags are preferred but any plastic bag will do the trick. Just put your hand inside the bag, scoop up the waste, turn it inside out, tie a knot and throw it away in your household garbage, not in the yard waste.



**Do not discard poop bags in yard waste on the street! Only discard them in the green household waste roll carts!**

## Pooper Scooper:

A pooper scooper is ideal for picking up waste in your yard. With a scooper, there is no need for you to bend over or get close to your dog's smelly stuff. All you need to do is scoop it, empty it into a bag, tie the bag, and throw it away in your household garbage. You can purchase pooper scoopers at a local pet store for between \$10 and \$30.



**Do not discard poop bags in yard waste on the street! Only discard them in the green household waste roll carts!**

## Dog Septic System:

Another increasingly popular option for disposing of pet waste is a doggy septic system. With this method, you don't have to put it in a bag and throw it away, which makes it more sanitary and reduces trash going to the landfill. A pet waste septic system works basically the same way a normal septic system does. You buy the septic bin and bury it in the ground while allowing a small hole to reach above the surface of the ground. After your dog goes outside, use a shovel or a scooper to scoop the waste and drop it down the hole into the septic system. Enzymes will break the material down. This system does require the addition of enzymes every six months (or more depending on the number of dogs) and water as needed. This system is sanitary, environmentally friendly, and convenient. You can create your own dog septic system or you can purchase one either at a local pet store or at [doggiedooley.com](http://doggiedooley.com).

## Hire a Teenager:

Often times, people have busy lives and find it close to impossible to make it outside to pick up dog waste. The septic system may save time by allowing you to dispose waste without having to bag it and bring it to a garbage can, but doing so still requires a time investment. If time is the issue for you, it may be beneficial to hire someone to pick the waste up for you. If you have a landscaper visit once a week, ask them to do it for you. If you don't have a landscaper, see if there are any teen age entrepreneurs in the neighborhood who would be willing to pick up your pet's waste for an easy dollar. This way, you can provide a job for a teenager and protect the local rivers and streams at the same time.

You may also choose to bury pet waste away from any vegetable gardens, lakes, streams, ditches or wells and dig them at least five inches deep. Or flush it!