



Sanitary Sewer vs. Storm Drain

Do you Know the Difference?

Sanitary Sewer

The sanitary sewer collects wastewater generated from the indoor plumbing (i.e., toilets, sinks, showers, washing machines, etc.) of residential, commercial and industrial properties and conveys it to a wastewater treatment plant. The City's sanitary sewers flow to Blue Plains Wastewater Treatment Plant, where nutrients, sediment and pollution is removed from the water before being discharged into the Potomac River.

Storm Drain

The storm drain is a system of inlets, pipes and swales that drain excess rain and ground water from impervious surfaces (paved streets, parking lots, sidewalks, roofs) to prevent or minimize flooding. The stormwater runoff collected by the storm drain is discharged to local streams **untreated**. The water then flows to the Potomac River and eventually to the Chesapeake Bay.