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## Ask Marilyn

*By Marilyn vos Savant*

**Where do storm drains lead?** —*S. B., Redlands, Calif.*

With spring rains upon us, it's a good time to note that storm drains usually do not lead to wastewater treatment facilities (the way sanitary sewer systems do), as many people assume. The purpose of these drains is to prevent flooding of streets by quickly transferring rainwater to natural bodies of water, so they lead to watersheds, streams, rivers, lakes, oceans, etc. This means that the pollutants that also go down those drains foul our natural waterways. Contaminants include motor oil, detergents such as soap from washing your car, dumped gallons of paint, fertilizer and pesticides that run off from your lawn, pet waste in the gutter, lawn debris, and more. You should never pour anything into a storm drain.