

What is an impervious surface?

An Impervious Surface is a created surface, such as brick, stone, concrete or asphalt, placed on the land to facilitate passage, for recreation purposes or decoration. Retaining walls are included as an impervious surface. Examples of impervious surfaces are patios, swimming pools, sidewalks, buildings, tennis courts, driveways, etc.

Why regulate impervious coverage?

As more land is covered with buildings and pavement, water runoff can cause drainage problems on your property and to neighboring properties, and worsen stream water quality.

Did you know?

Studies indicate that that runoff from urbanized areas is the leading source of water quality impairments

Ridgefield regulates impervious coverage

Due to the impacts of impervious coverage, New Canaan limits the amount of impervious cover depending on the property's size and zone. Also, gravel driveways are considered impervious cover under the regulations.

Where impervious areas are proposed, additional stormwater management measures may be required to ensure no increase in peak runoff from the site. Refer to the Town's Stormwater Policy for more information.



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Minimizing Impervious Coverage



A Homeowner's Guide to Understanding the Challenge of Impervious Surfaces

Minimize

Develop alternatives to areas traditionally covered by impervious surfaces. Porous pavement materials are available for driveways and sidewalks, and native vegetation and mulch can replace high maintenance grass lawns.

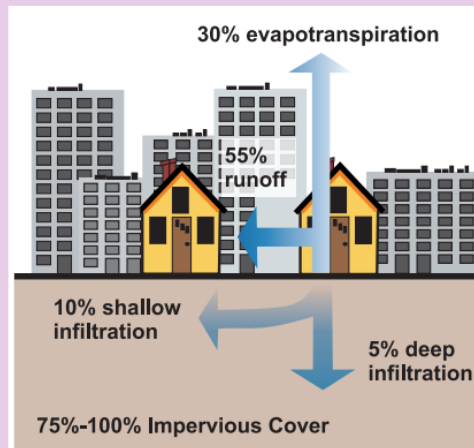
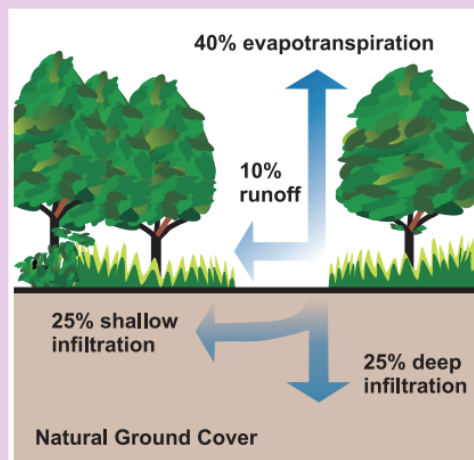
Mitigate

Forms of stormwater management, such as detention ponds, rain gardens and infiltration chambers, are frequently used to mitigate the impacts of impervious surfaces in existing and new developments.

Maintain

It is important to maintain the existing impervious cover in a way that encourages the flow of the runoff through the stormwater system and reduces the pollutant loads in that runoff. Clear trash and debris from paved surfaces. Promote flow through the system while providing stormwater treatment for trash, litter, coarse sediment, oil, and other debris before the runoff proceeds through the system.

Drainage systems are a critical, but often overlooked, element of impervious surfaces. Look for leaves and debris in basin sumps and clean those out. Also look at the outlet of the drainage system, and be sure that it is clear of obstruction, and that there are no signs of erosion.



Impervious cover reduces the amount of rainfall that infiltrates into the ground, reducing the ability of groundwater to recharge.

Did you know?

Due to impervious surfaces like pavement and rooftops, a typical city block generates 5 times more runoff than a woodland area of the same size

Increased Pollutant Loads

Impervious surfaces, because they don't allow stormwater to infiltrate into the ground, increase the variety and amount of pollutants carried into streams, rivers, and lakes.

The pollutants include:

- Sediment
- Oil, grease, and toxic chemicals from motor vehicles
- Pesticides and nutrients from lawns and gardens
- Viruses, bacteria, and nutrients from pet waste
- Road salts
- Heavy metals from galvanized metals, motor vehicles, and other sources
- Thermal pollution from dark impervious surfaces such as streets and rooftops

These pollutants can harm fish and wildlife populations, kill native vegetation, foul drinking water supplies, and make recreational areas unsafe and unpleasant.