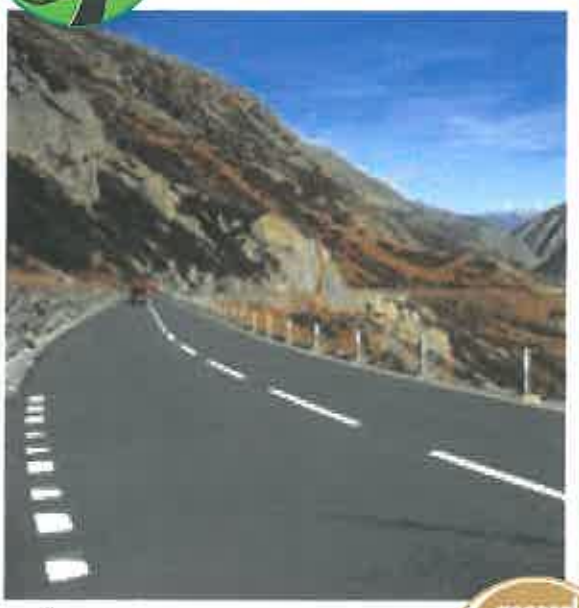
Impervious Surface

Photo Source: Colorado Department of Transportation

general info

02-0012-11

Impervious Surface



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During and after precipitation events, undeveloped land naturally absorbs water and allows some of it to seep downward to recharge underground aquifers, while water near the surface has moisture to support vegetation. Some of the precipitation may run off to nearby lakes or streams.

Urban development covers a significant percentage of land with impervious surface such as roads, driveways, parking lots, sidewalks and buildings. Since precipitation cannot soak down into the ground through these surfaces, less water is absorbed to support vegetation and recharge aquifers, and more of the water runs off "unused" into nearby drainages, often carrying chemical pollutants such as fertilizers and pesticides. This runoff not only carries contaminants but increases stream volume, thus causing erosion, sedimentation and flooding downstream.

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