

# FACT SHEET: Illicit Discharge...*Only Rain in the Drain!*

## ▶ What is an Illicit Discharge?

An illicit discharge is the discharge of any substance that is not stormwater into a stormwater system. The discharge can occur via overland flow or direct dumping of materials into a catch basin. Not only is this bad for our environment, but putting materials into a stormwater system is illegal.

## ▶ Why is Illicit Discharge a Concern?

Illicit discharge is a problem because stormwater flows directly into our local waterways. Unlike wastewater from your home, which flows to a wastewater treatment plant for treatment prior to discharge, stormwater does not receive any additional treatment. Illicit discharges can dump chemicals, nutrients, and other toxic pollutants into our creeks, streams, and rivers.

## ▶ Examples of Illicit Discharge

Illicit discharge can be an unintentional situation or an intentional dumping that allows pollutants into the stormwater system. Examples of illicit discharge include:

- Dumping motor oil, paint, or other household hazardous waste into a catch basin.
- Allowing wash water from a car wash to enter a storm drain.
- Connecting basement drains to stormwater systems.
- Placing lawn clippings or other yard waste into a stormwater system or in a location that can carry it into a stormwater system during a storm.
- Leaving spilled contaminants, such as oil or gasoline, on pavement so that it washes into the stormwater system during a subsequent rain event.

## ▶ What Can You Do?

We should do everything possible to protect and preserve our ground and surface water quality. We can all make a difference by taking a few simple steps:

- Check with your municipality and county for household hazardous waste drop-off locations and times.
- Volunteer to help your municipality prevent dumping into stormwater drains by marking them.
- Clean up spills on pavement as soon as possible using cat litter or other absorbent material.
- Read chemical labels and purchase non-hazardous options whenever possible.
- Contact your local municipality if you observe illegal dumping/illicit discharge, or if you see anyone pouring something into a storm drain inlet, ditch, or stream.
- Never place yard waste near a stormwater system, including along a back property line, along a stream bank, in the woods, or in another off-road area.



## DID YOU KNOW?

A wastewater (sewer) system and a storm drain system are not the same – they are completely different systems.

When you wash your dishes, take a shower, or flush your toilet, that water from your home flows into a wastewater treatment plant where it is treated and filtered.

However, the water that flows off your driveway and yard, into the street, and down a storm drain directly flows to a stream, lake, river, or ocean. As it travels, it picks up pollutants that are never treated.



### FACT:

It is illegal and dangerous to dump household hazardous waste down storm drains.



## WE CAN HELP!

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