



Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination Informational Bulletin No. 2 Phase II (MS4) Stormwater Program Hanover County, Virginia

What is an “Illicit Discharge”?

An illicit discharge is defined as “...any discharge to a Small Municipal Separated Storm Sewer System (MS4) that is not composed entirely of stormwater...” with some exceptions. These exceptions include discharges from NPDES permitted industrial sources and discharges from fire fighting activities. Illicit discharges are considered “illicit” because MS4s are not designed to accept, process, or discharge non-stormwater wastes.

Why are Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination efforts Important?

Illicit discharges enter MS4s through either direct connections (e.g. wastewater piping either mistakenly or deliberately connected to storm sewer systems or oil and grease dumped directly into storm drains) or indirect connections (e.g. infiltration from cracked sanitary sewer systems, failed septic systems, or spills collected by storm drains). The result is untreated discharges to receiving water bodies that contribute high levels of pollutants (e.g., heavy metals, toxins, solvents, nutrients, and bacteria) that have been shown to significantly degrade water quality and threaten aquatic, wildlife, and human health.

Sources of Illicit Discharges
Sanitary wastewater
Effluent from septic tanks
Car wash wastewater
Improperly disposed oil
Radiator flushing
Laundry wastewaters
Roadway spills
Household Hazardous Wastes

What are the County Steps for Detecting and Addressing Illicit Discharges?

Step 1: Locate Problem Areas - priority problem areas include those areas with older sanitary sewer or septic systems and commercial and light industrial activities. Methods to locate problem areas include public complaints, visual screening inspections, and water sampling methods.

Step 2: Find the Source - once a problem area or discharge is found, additional efforts may be needed to determine the source. Methods to determine the source include tracing the discharge upstream, requiring inspections of possible failed septic systems, or dye testing of storm sewers.

Step 3: Remove/Correct Illicit Connection - once the source is identified, the offending discharger will be notified and directed to correct the problem. Education and working corroborative efforts will be used as an effective means to resolve the problem before taking legal action.

Step 4: Document Actions Taken - all actions taken during these steps will be documented. Doing so will illustrate that progress is being made to eliminate illicit connections and discharges. Documented actions will include information such as; the number of outfalls screened, complaints received and addressed, number of discharges eliminated, water sampling results, and actions taken in finding the source (e.g. tracing discharges upstream, septic system inspections, or dye testing of storm sewers).

Who should be Contacted if you Suspect an Illicit Discharge?

If you suspect an illicit discharge in your community, please contact the Hanover County Department of Public Works at (804) 365-6181. Additional information about other County Environmental Programs may be obtained at <http://www.co.hanover.va.us/works/envirmnt.htm>