

# DAUPHIN COUNTY MUNICIPAL SEPARATE STORM SEWER SYSTEM (MS4) PROGRAM ILLICIT DISCHARGES

## WHAT IS AN ILLICIT DISCHARGE?

For the purposes of the MS4 program, an illicit discharge is any discharge to a storm sewer system that is not composed entirely of stormwater. Some exceptions are:

Water Line Flushing	Riparian Habitats And Wetlands Flow	Dechlorinated Swimming Pool Water
Uncontaminated Ground Water Infiltration	Foundation Drains	Air Conditioning Condensate
Uncontaminated Pumped Groundwater	Footing Drains	Irrigation Water
Rising Groundwater	Street Wash Water	Springs
Diverted Stream Flows	Lawn Watering	Water from Crawl Space Pumps
Discharges From Potable Water Sources	Landscape Irrigation	Individual Residential Car Washing

Based on this definition, anything entering a storm sewer that is not pure stormwater or one of the above exceptions is considered an illicit discharge.

## EXAMPLES OF ILLICIT DISCHARGES

Some obvious examples of illicit discharges include:

- Dumping motor oil or other substances into a storm sewer
- Disposing of pet waste in storm sewers
- Disposing of grass clippings in storm sewers
- Washing spilled contaminants into storm sewer

Less obvious examples include:

- Leaking automobile fluids
- Lawn fertilizers and herbicides washing into storm sewers
- Illegal connections to storm sewers
- Litter that washes into storm sewers
- Sediment washed from temporarily stored stone or soil



*This discharge to a storm sewer delivers contaminants (motor oil, trash and organic debris) directly to a nearby stream.*

## ADVERSE IMPACTS OF ILLICIT DISCHARGES



*Above - the black substance indicates a potential illicit discharge.*

*Below - Sediment entering storm sewers will end up in a stream.*

Pollutants that enter storm sewers eventually end up in streams. Once in a stream, pollutants may cause a variety of adverse impacts to the stream and aquatic organisms, such as fish, that live in the stream.

The pollutant itself may be toxic to the organisms in the stream causing a variety of problems including death. Some pollutants, such as sediment, cause problems for the stream and aquatic life. In addition to degrading habitat, sediment carries other pollutants such as phosphorous, into streams. Nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorous) cause algae blooms which deplete the water of oxygen when the bloom dies and decays. Decaying organic material such as leaves and grass also deplete oxygen supplies.

If a stream becomes too polluted, there may also be other adverse impacts. The stream may become unusable for water based recreation such as fishing, swimming and boating.

## **DAUPHIN COUNTY PROGRAM**

In 2011, the Dauphin County Commissioners adopted an ordinance making it illegal to discharge any material other than stormwater to **county owned or operated storm sewer systems**. In addition to the above exceptions, the county ordinance also exempts:

- Water from fire fighting activities
- Discharges necessary to protect public health and safety
- Dye testing
- Any other discharge not containing pollutants

This means that with the exception of the above exemptions (federal and county ordinance) anything entering the storm drains at county facilities other than stormwater is prohibited by county ordinance and by federal regulation. **Similar ordinances are in effect in nearly all municipalities in Dauphin County.**

Also, as part of its MS4 program, Dauphin County has developed procedures for detecting and eliminating illicit discharges. These procedures include:

1. Development of storm sewer maps to assist in determining sources of illicit discharges.
3. Enacting an Illicit Discharge Ordinance. This ordinance was adopted by the County Commissioners in 2011.
4. Screening outfalls for illicit discharges.
5. Educate county employees and the public on the water quality impacts of illicit discharges.

## **WHAT YOU CAN DO**

- 💧 Watch for situations that could potentially discharge pollutants to storm sewers or streams.
- 💧 Always be careful with chemicals and other substances. Use them properly.
- 💧 Never dispose of any substance in a storm drain or on the ground.
- 💧 Repair vehicle and equipment leaks as soon as possible to prevent fluids from polluting streams.
- 💧 **If you notice discolored or odorous discharges from storm sewers that come from county owned or operated facilities, notify the appropriate county agency immediately.**
- 💧 **If you notice discolored or odorous discharges from storm sewers other than county owned or operated facilities, notify your municipality immediately.**
- 💧 Never attempt to clean up spills or discharges of unknown substances. Some substances can be hazardous to human health or even deadly.

**THE PHONE NUMBERS BELOW CAN BE USED TO REPORT ILLICIT DISCHARGES COMING FROM STORM SEWERS FROM DAUPHIN COUNTY FACILITIES.**

DAUPHIN COUNTY MAINTENANCE	717-780-6327
EMERGENCY	911
DAUPHIN COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY	717-558-6800
PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION CENTRAL NUMBER	800-541-2050
PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION SOUTH CENTRAL REGIONAL OFFICE – BUSINESS HOURS	717-705-4041
SOUTH CENTRAL REGIONAL OFFICE – AFTER HOURS	866-825-0208
DAUPHIN COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT	717-921-8100

**IF YOU SEE AN ILLICIT DISCHARGE COMING FROM OTHER STORM SEWERS OR IN STREAMS YOU CAN CALL THE PHONE NUMBERS BELOW. YOU SHOULD ALSO CONTACT YOUR LOCAL MUNICIPALITY.**

PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION CENTRAL NUMBER	800-541-2050
PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION SOUTH CENTRAL REGIONAL OFFICE – BUSINESS HOURS	717-705-4041
SOUTH CENTRAL REGIONAL OFFICE – AFTER HOURS	866-825-0208

**FOR GENERAL INFORMATION ON STREAM POLLUTION**

DAUPHIN COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT	717-921-8100
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