

ILLICIT DISCHARGES

Did you know that most storm drains lead directly to our waterways without undergoing treatment at a wastewater treatment plant? This means even if you live miles from the nearest river or lake, your actions at home can still impact our shared water resources. Soaps and suds from washing our cars in the driveway, bacteria from pet waste, and excess lawn chemicals, can be swept up with runoff and pollute aquatic habitats. These examples - and anything else that drains to a storm drain or directly to a waterway that is NOT stormwater - is considered an illicit discharge.

Illicit discharges can also be the result of improper, or illicit, connections of sanitary sewers into the storm sewer system, sending domestic household waste, wash water, and other waste water directly into our waterways. Other illicit charges come from intentional dumping, be it pouring used motor oil into drains, or a restaurant dumping dirty mop water on the pavement outside the building, where it flows to a stormwater drain and sends detergents and other pollutants into waterways. Other discharges are from accidental sources, like leaking vehicles and fuel tanks. Whatever the source, illicit discharges are illegal and harmful, but preventable!

What Can You Do About Illicit Discharges?

You can help keep our lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, and groundwater clean by applying the following tips:

Only rain in the drain: Never dump motor oil, chemicals, pet waste, dirty or soapy water, or anything else down the storm drain or in a drainage ditch. All of these materials pollute our lakes and rivers!

Sweep it: Do you have extra fertilizer, grass clippings, or dirt on your driveway or sidewalk? Sweep it back onto your lawn. Hosing your driveway sends these pollutants into storm drains that lead directly to our lakes and rivers.

Pick it up: If you see garbage near a storm drain, pick it up. Throw litter in its proper place.

Clean it: Clean up after your pet to reduce pet waste traveling to local waterways.

Dispose of it properly: Take household hazardous waste (paint, motor oil, etc.) to a local collection event.

Report it: If you see someone dumping something into a storm drain, or see a direct connection to the river that may be pollution you are encouraged to report it. You can do this by contacting your local public works department. In addition, you can contact the Michigan Pollution Emergency Alerting System (PEAS) at (800) 292-4706. PEAS is a 24 hour hotline managed by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and is used to report environmental

