



Illicit Discharges and Connections

Construction Site Fact Sheet No. 2



What Is An Illicit Discharge?

An **illicit discharge** is any discharge to your construction site or drainage system that is not comprised entirely of stormwater.

*Storm drain systems typically do **not** have filters or treatment, so pollutants go **directly** to the waters Rhode Islanders use for drinking, fishing, swimming, and boating.*



Concrete washout pollution, an example of an illicit discharge, is flowing directly into a storm drain on this RIDOT site.

Discharges from Construction Sites

Construction sites often contribute illicit discharges that may go unnoticed. As stormwater flows over a site, it can pick up sediment, chemicals, and debris.

Illicit discharges from construction sites can include:

- Sediment tracked offsite
- Runoff from stockpiles
- Concrete washout
- Paint and stucco washout
- Hydraulic fluid leaks & fueling overflows
- Trash and construction wastes
- Fertilizer/pesticides used on site

If you see any of these signs, take measures to **STOP the discharge ASAP**.
Contact RIDEM for assistance.

How Can They Be Prevented?

Following the project's site-specific Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Plan (SESC) or Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) is critical to keeping illicit discharges from occurring. Examples of **Control Measures** that can prevent illicit discharges include:

- Keep soil stockpiles covered
- Dispose of concrete washout properly
- Use graveled construction entrances to enter and exit the site
- Keep trash contained and covered
- Dispose of chemicals and waste materials properly
- Clean up hydraulic fluid leaks and other spills immediately

How Is An Illicit Discharge Different From A Spill?

A **spill** is an unintentional release of a non-stormwater substance to a water of the state, a stormwater drainage system or property that is related to *a single event*. Many times, spills are associated with emergency situations such as an automobile accident spilling oil or other automotive fluids onto the highway surface and potentially flowing into the stormwater system.

What Is An Illicit Connection?

An **illicit connection** is any unauthorized pipe, ditch, or other manmade structure that is physically connected to a property or drainage system. These are often found during construction.

Examples might include:

- Sanitary wastewater pipe that is directly connected from a home or business to a storm drain system
- A shop floor drain that is connected to a storm drain system

Typical pollutants found in flows coming from illicit connections include: raw sewage, heavy metals, oil and grease, solids, detergents, chlorine, potassium, ammonia and nutrients. Raw sewage typically includes fecal coliform bacteria, which may cause public health concerns.

Discharges from illicit connections occur during wet weather and dry weather. During dry weather, the pollution effects of local waters can be severe because the discharge is not diluted in the storm sewers before it reaches the water body.

What Do I Look For?

- Unidentified piping materials connected to the storm sewer system like PVC piping
- Pipes leading into the storm sewer system from private homes and businesses
- Abnormal flow during dry weather periods
- Odors coming from the storm sewer system
- Any of the following in the storm sewer system: discolored water, floatables, suds, oil, staining and residues.



Sewer camera photo showing illicit connection (left) to storm drain.



Stormwater discharge to roadway system found during construction. If allowed to remain, additional flow must be managed.



Sump pump connection to a storm drain

**What Do I Do If I Find One? Call the RIDEM - Office of Customer and Technical Assistance
401-222-6822**