



# Illicit Discharges and Connections



Updated 2017

*You know illicit discharges are illegal. But why are they so harmful and what can you do to prevent them?*

## 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.

## 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.**

## 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 a 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.



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

## 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, but are not limited to:

- Cover all soil stockpiles
- Dispose of concrete washout properly off site
- Use maintained gravel 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

## 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:

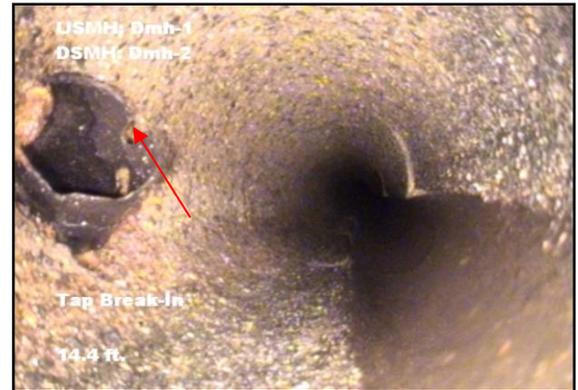
- Sanitary wastewater pipe that is directly connected from a home or business to the storm drain system
- A shop floor drain that is connected to the storm drain system

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 bacteria, which may cause public health concerns.

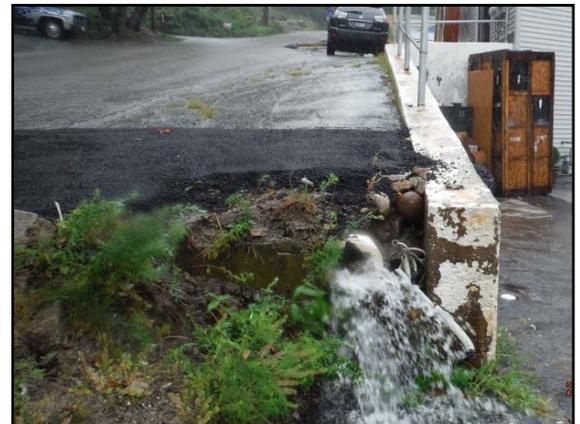
Discharges from illicit connections occur during wet weather and dry weather. During dry weather, the pollution effects of local waters can be severe because the discharge is not diluted in the storm sewers before it reaches the water body.

## What Do I Look For?

- Unidentified piping materials connected to the storm sewer system such as 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 an illicit connection (red arrow).



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



Sump pump connection to a storm drain