

# Water Pollution Detection and Elimination

## WHAT IS AN ILLICIT DISCHARGE?

Illicit discharge is concentrated water pollution entering a stream, river or lake. In many towns and cities you will see a number of pipes leading directly into the streams. These pipes carry runoff from streets, parking lots and rooftops and should only contain water. If you see a pipe that has bubbles, floating materials, odd colors or a smell coming from it and entering a creek, that is illicit discharge. Illicit discharge is water pollution that can contain sewage, chemicals, detergents, soil or bacteria.



## WHAT CAN I DO?

- 1 Take a photo of the pipe and note what you see and smell.
- 2 Call your town's emergency hotline and ask for the stormwater administrator or water department.
- 3 Share all the information you have about the water pollution you saw.



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## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE POLLUTION IS REPORTED?

- Once the city or town gets a report of illicit discharge, they investigate and find where the pollution is coming from.
- If it is a sewer overflow, the city or town will immediately stop the pollution.
- If the source is from a landowner or business, they will get a notice that pollution is coming from their property and will have the chance to clean the pollution and fix the problem.
- The Clean Water Act makes illicit discharge illegal and the if the violator repeatedly pollutes the water, they are subject to a fine.



## COMMON ILLICIT DISCHARGES

- Illegal dumps 
- Paint, motor oil and other toxic substances poured into or near storm drains 
- Broken sanitary sewer lines or sewer overflows 
- Cross-connection pipes where sewer pipes are connected to stormwater pipes 
- Improper boat, RV or septic waste disposal 
- Washing vehicles where runoff drains into the storm sewer system 
- Landscape irrigation that runs off yards, such as pet wastes, pesticides, and fertilizers 



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