



How Can I Help Prevent Discharges into Storm Drains?

- Use pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers **SPARINGLY** and away from storm drains and ditches.
- **DO NOT** pour household cleaners and paints on driveways or into storm drains.
- **DO NOT** blow leaves or dump lawn/yard trimmings into storm drains.
- **PICK UP** litter. Adopt a storm drain, ditch, or section of road to keep clean.
- **DO NOT** store or expose materials to rain that could “wash off” into storm drains or streets.
- **CHECK** to see if septic tank flow is entering storm drains. If so, correct the situation.
- **NEVER** pour oil or anti freeze down or near a storm drain, or onto the street. If you change your oil or antifreeze, put them in used containers, seal the containers, and take to the nearest collection site or center, such as the Bessemer Recycling Center.

Within City Limits, Report the Following to Bessemer Storm Water Management:

- Witnessing someone drop litter
- Oil sheen in a body of water
- Leaves or grass clippings deposited in or near storm drains
- Sewage odor from a storm drain, inlet, or body of water.
- Spills or dumping of oil, paint, household cleaners, antifreeze, pesticides, or fertilizers.
- Discharge of chlorinated swimming pool water to a storm drain
- Sediment tracking from construction sites into streets
- Illegal dumping (at sites where regular garbage and trash is not picked up)
- Witnessing anything being disposed of into a storm drain



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ILLICIT DISCHARGE

- **What is an Illicit Discharge?**
- examples
- **Why Should We Care?**
- **Exempted Non-Storm Water Discharges**
- **Help Prevent Illicit Discharges**



City of Bessemer
Storm Water Management
Educational Series

What is an Illicit Discharge?



An Illicit Discharge (Improper Disposal) is any kind of emission to a municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) that is not entirely composed of storm water. The MS4 consists of storm drains, ditches, man-made channels, and municipal streets.

Eliminating illicit discharges into storm water can reduce pollution of our waterways.

What Are Some Examples of Illicit Discharges?

- Litter
- Effluent from a failing septic system
- Sediment tracking from a construction site (into the street, storm drain, or body of water)
- Spilled chemicals (from improper oil disposal, roadway accidents, automobile maintenance, etc.) that find their way to a storm drain

Did You Know?

- Storm drains collect rainwater from driveways, roads, & yards and directly transport to streams. They **DO NOT** go to a treatment plant or get treated before discharge like sanitary sewer water.
- Anything you put in a storm drain ends up in a creek, river or body of

water – where you swim and fish.

- One quart of oil can contaminate up to **2 Million Gallons** of drinking water.

Why Should We Care?

During and after rainstorms, pollutants on the surface are washed into our storm sewers. These storm sewers carry rainwater, along with pollutants, into streams and rivers. Such pollutants degrade our water quality and are harmful to the environment and to humans.

A 2012 estimate by the US Environmental Protection Agency showed that **35% of US waters are not even clean enough to support fishing or swimming** because of pollutants such as bacteria. In urban areas, untreated or partially treated sewage makes its way into rivers and streams through sewer overflows and leaks, dumping, illegal sewer connections, and failing septic systems.

According to the Ocean Conservancy, ocean trash ranks as one of the most serious pollution problems of our time. Much more than an eyesore, trash in the water and on the shore affects the health of people, wildlife and economies. For example trash in the water:

- Injures swimmers and beachgoers;
- Harms wildlife that eats it or gets trapped in its mess;
- Drives away tourists – and their wallets; and
- Ensnares boat propellers, a costly navigation hazard.

Exempted Non-Storm Water Discharges

The City of Bessemer does allow the following discharges to flow into the MS4:

- Water Line Flushing
- Landscape irrigation
- Diverted stream flows
- Rising ground water
- Uncontaminated ground water infiltration
- Uncontaminated pumped ground water
- Discharges from water sources
- Foundation and footing drains
- Air conditioning condensation
- Irrigation water
- Springs
- Water from crawl space pumps
- Lawn watering runoff
- Individual residential car washing and charitable car washes
- Flows from wetlands
- De-chlorinated swimming pool discharges
- Residual street wash water
- Discharges from firefighting activities
- Flows from riparian habitats and wetlands
- Non-storm water discharges which are in compliance with a separate NPDES permit

