

## DAUPHIN COUNTY MS4 PROGRAM RECOGNIZING AND REPORTING ILLICIT DISCHARGES

### WHAT IS AN ILLICIT DISCHARGE?

Federal regulations applicable to the Dauphin County MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System) program define an illicit discharge as any discharge to an MS4 that is not composed entirely of stormwater. In practical terms, illicit discharges are any pollutants entering a storm sewer.

### EXAMPLES OF ILLICIT DISCHARGES

Some obvious examples of an illicit discharge include:

- Dumping motor oil or other substances into a storm sewer
- Disposing of pet waste in a storm sewer
- Disposing of grass clippings into a storm sewer
- Washing spilled contaminants into a storm sewer

Less obvious examples include:

- Leaking automobile fluids
- Lawn fertilizers and herbicides washing into a storm sewer
- Illegal connections to storm sewers
- Litter washing into a storm sewer
- Sediment washing into a storm sewer from a soil stock pile



This discharge to a storm sewer delivers contaminants (motor oil, trash and organic debris) directly to a nearby stream.

### ADVERSE IMPACTS OF ILLICIT DISCHARGES



Pollutants that enter storm sewers eventually end up in streams. Once in a stream, pollutants may cause a variety of adverse impacts to the stream and aquatic organisms, such as fish, that live in the stream.

The pollutant itself may be toxic to the organisms in the stream causing a variety of problems including death. Some pollutants, such as sediment, cause problems for the stream and aquatic life. In addition to degrading habitat, sediment carries other pollutants such as phosphorous, into streams. Nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorous) cause algae blooms which deplete the water of oxygen when the bloom dies and decays. Decaying organic material such as leaves and grass can also deplete oxygen supplies.

If a stream becomes too polluted, there may also be other adverse impacts. The stream may become unusable for water based recreation such as fishing, swimming and boating.

Above - The black substance indicates an illicit discharge.  
Below - Sediment in storm sewers will end up in streams.

### DAUPHIN COUNTY PROGRAM

As the owner or operator of facilities with separate storm sewer systems, Dauphin County must comply with permit conditions under the NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) MS4 permitting program. Some of these conditions apply to illicit discharges.

As part of its MS4 program, Dauphin County has developed procedures for detecting and eliminating illicit discharges at county owned or operated facilities. These procedures are designed to eliminate or minimize the potential for and the adverse impact from any illicit discharge, accidental or purposeful, from regulated county facilities. The key elements of the Dauphin County plan include:

1. Development of a plan for detecting and eliminating illicit discharges.
2. Development of storm sewer maps to assist in determining sources of illicit discharges. These maps have been developed and are regularly updated.
3. Enactment of an Illicit Discharge Ordinance. In 2011, the Dauphin County Commissioners adopted an ordinance making it illegal to discharge any material other than stormwater to **county owned or operated storm sewer systems. Similar ordinances are in effect in nearly all municipalities in Dauphin County.**
4. Screening outfalls for illicit discharges. Annually, Conservation District staff screen selected outfalls. Screenings are conducted during dry weather at least three days after the last rainfall. If a discharge is found it must be analyzed to determine if it contains contaminants. If so, a procedure is implemented to determine and eliminate the source.
5. Outreach and training for county employees on the water quality impacts of illicit discharges. This is accomplished through distribution of education materials and employee training.
6. Implementation of erosion and sediment pollution control permitting and inspections for constructions sites under Chapter 102 (relation to erosion and sediment pollution control), Title 25 of the Pennsylvania Code and the NPDES permitting program.

**WHAT YOU CAN DO**

You can help minimize the potential for pollutants to enter storm sewers and streams.

- 💧 Be aware of your workplace. Look for spills or other pollutants in parking lots, driveways and sidewalks.
- 💧 Watch for situations that could potentially discharge pollutants to storm sewers or streams.
- 💧 Always be careful with chemicals and other substances. Use them properly.
- 💧 Never dispose of any substance in a storm drain or on the ground.
- 💧 Repair vehicle and equipment leaks as soon as possible to prevent fluids from polluting streams.
- 💧 **If you notice discolored or odorous discharges from county storm sewers, notify maintenance staff immediately.**
- 💧 **If you notice discolored or odorous discharges from storm sewers other than county storm sewers, notify the municipality immediately.**
- 💧 **NEVER ATTEMPT TO CLEAN UP SPILLS OR DISCHARGES OF SUBSTANCES THAT ARE KNOWN OR SUSPECTED TO BE HAZARDOUS. SOME SUBSTANCES CAN BE DANGEROUS OR EVEN DEADLY.**

**USE THESE PHONE NUMBERS TO REPORT ILLICIT DISCHARGES**

<b>DAUPHIN COUNTY MAINTENANCE</b>	<b>717-780-6372</b>
<b>DAUPHIN COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>717-558-6800</b>
<b>PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION</b>	<b>800-541-2050</b>

**PLEASE CONTACT DAUPHIN COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT AT 717-921-8100 FOR:**

- MORE INFORMATION ON STREAM POLLUTION
- MORE INFORMATION ON ILLICIT DISCHARGES
- MORE INFORMATION ON THE DAUPHIN COUNTY MS4 PROGRAM
- GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE QUALITY OF STREAMS IN DAUPHIN COUNTY