

How to Spot Illicit Discharges

A Tip Card for Chemistry & Flow Monitoring Volunteers

Important Numbers

EMERGENCIES

Police/Fire 911
MDEQ Pollution Alert System 800-292-4706; 24 hrs

NON-EMERGENCIES

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An illicit discharge is any discharge containing polluting material, such as sediment, nutrients, oil and bacteria. These discharges can drain to lakes and streams via storm drains. The communities in Southeast Michigan are required to prevent illicit discharges from entering storm water. You can do your part by notifying the appropriate agency when you spot a potential illicit discharge.

What to Report?

- Spills and contamination to lakes, rivers and streams
- Suspicious dumping to catch basins or waterways
- Unusual discharges from pipes
- Sewage on the ground or draining to surface water
- Large number of dead fish in waterways
- Failing or leaky septic systems
- Polluted runoff from storage piles or dumpsters to catch basins or waterways
- Sewage, detergent, chemical, petroleum or rotten egg odors
- Soil erosion from construction sites



Sanitary Sewer Discharges

- Sanitary debris
- Staining on pipe
- Soap suds
- Gray or discolored water
- Odors: sewage, rotten eggs or detergents



Failed Septic Systems

- Overgrown or wet patch of grass
- Cheater pipe to ditch
- Soap suds
- Gray or discolored water
- Odors: sewage, rotten eggs or detergents



Illegal Dumping, Spills or Floor Drain Connections

- Oil sheen
- Stained sediment, rocks or vegetation
- Odor: petroleum, chemical



Industrial Discharges

- Discolored water or vegetation
- Odor: petroleum, chemical



Agricultural Runoff, Fertilizers, or Sanitary Sewer Waste

- Algae growth near drain outlet or in a ditch



Soil Erosion from Construction Sites

- Bare soils or banks with no soil erosion control/silt fencing
- Muddy discharge from an outfall
- Coatings on streambank

