

Report an Illicit Discharge or Spill

What is an Illicit Discharge?

An illicit discharge is an illegal connection or tie-in to a storm sewer. Municipal storm sewers are designed to convey storm water runoff to nearby lakes and streams to prevent flooding, but they are not designed to handle flow from sources such as gutter downspouts. Generally, there is no treatment to the runoff before it empties into a receiving stream. Dumping anything other than storm water into a storm drain is illegal and considered an illicit discharge.

Examples of Illicit Discharges

- Sanitary wastewater (sewage)
- Septic tank waste
- Car wash, laundry and industrial wastewaters
- Improper disposal of auto and household toxics, such as motor oil and pesticides
- Spills on roadways and other accidents

Why is an illicit discharge a problem?

Illicit discharges allow pollutants to enter lakes and streams causing public health concerns, unpleasant odors/color, and harming aquatic and animal life. Pollution can also lead to excess growth of vegetation.



How do I spot an illicit discharge?

Look for makeshift pipes or hoses that lead to a catch basin, road ditch, county drain or body of water.

Watch for stains, unusual odors, and structural damage to streets or gutters and abnormal vegetative growth in nearby lakes and streams.

Report an illicit discharge or spill

To report a spill or an illicit discharge please contact the Bay County Drain Commissioner office at **989-895-4290** or after hours call **911**, or to call the **Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes & Energy (EGLE)**, the 24-hour toll-free number is **1-800-292-4706**. The PEAS hotline should be used to report environmental pollution emergencies such as tanker accidents, pipeline breaks and releases of reportable quantities of hazardous substances.

How can I help reduce polluted storm water runoff?

- Never dump anything down a storm sewer or drain
- Take used oil to your local quick lube or auto shop
- Dispose of pet waste in a trash can
- Wash your car on your lawn so excess water, chemicals and dirt are filtered through grass and vegetation