



# What Can You Do To Prevent An Illicit Discharge?

Water Quality Management  
<http://environmental.larc.nasa.gov/water>  
 June, 2016

An illicit discharge is a big problem in some areas because it is not always easy to detect and can often go unnoticed. It is also a large source of pollution into our waterways. The first thing you can do is understand what an illicit discharge is:

**Illicit discharge:** Any discharge (release) to the stormwater sewer system that is NOT composed entirely of stormwater



Illicit discharges are considered “illicit” because the stormwater sewer systems are not designed to accept or process water that isn’t stormwater. Most stormwater sewer systems are designed to quickly carry water away from developed areas and solid areas (roads, rooftops, parking lots) to natural drainage areas (rivers, creeks, and the bay). Therefore, stormwater sewer systems provide little-to-no treatment of the water that flows through them.

*The results from an illicit discharge are high levels of pollutants (like trash, sediment, heavy metals, pathogens, nutrients, oils and grease) flowing directly into our Chesapeake Bay*

For us, that includes a number of activities that we do day-to-day without realizing that pollutants are being carried into our stormwater sewer system and nearby waterways. To counter our contributions of pollutants into our waterways, we need to alter those activities and educate others of pollution risks.





# Recognizing Illicit Discharges

Being able to recognize and report stormwater pollution is important in order to minimize the number of pollutants entering the Chesapeake Bay. Below are some examples that you may see:







## Preventing Illicit Discharges

Preventing stormwater pollution would be the best case scenario—stop the problem before it starts. Here are some suggestions for your day-to-day activities:

### Keep Outdoor Areas Clean

- Keep drum lids closed and secured tightly
- Be mindful of trash
- Store equipment with exposed oily/greasy parts in a covered area and off the ground

### Be Mindful of What Goes Down the Drain

- No fats, greases, oils, chemicals, or toxins down ANY drain
- Pour cleaning water in mop sink or wash basin
- Properly dispose of used oil and oily rags

### Be Aware of Potential Problems

- Use secondary containment or spill pallets for chemicals and oils
- Don't place liquids near a floor drain
- Maintain good housekeeping

## Reporting Illicit Discharges

Now that you know what an illicit discharge looks like, you can help by reporting what you see. All NASA Langley personnel should report any suspected water pollution to the Environmental Management Branch.

*Let's work together to keep our water clean!*

**Call\*: Peter Van Dyke (757.864.7517) or Ande Remington (757.864.2451)**

\*In an emergency, always call 911 (from a Center phone) or 757.864.2222 (from a cell phone)