



# Water Pollution: What is Illicit Discharge?

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Illicit discharges are a main source of pollution into our waterways. Illicit discharges are a problem because they are not always obvious or easily detectable and can often go unnoticed. The best place to begin in stopping this type of pollution is to first understand what an illicit discharge is:

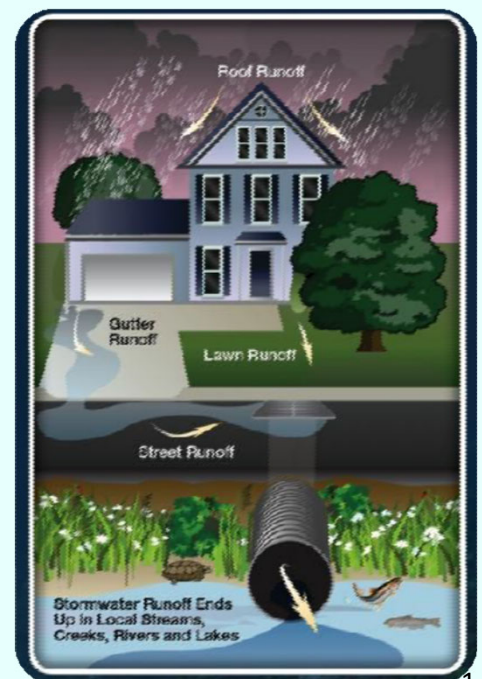


**Illicit discharge:** Any discharge (release) to the stormwater sewer system that is NOT composed entirely of stormwater

Illicit discharges are considered “illicit” because stormwater sewer systems are only designed to accept or process water that is pure stormwater. Most stormwater sewer systems are designed to quickly carry water away from developed and solid areas (roads, rooftops, parking lots) to natural drainage areas (rivers, creeks, and the bay). As a result, stormwater sewer systems provide little-to-no treatment of the water that flows through them.

*The impacts from illicit discharge are high levels of pollutants (trash, sediment, heavy metals, pathogens, nutrients, fats, oils and grease) flowing directly into the Chesapeake Bay* 🦀

Without realizing it, many of our normal activities (mowing lawns, seeding, washing cars, fertilizer, etc.) contribute to pollutants being carried into our stormwater sewer systems and nearby waterways. To lessen the impacts on our waterways, we need to understand the pollution risks, help educate others, and alter our activities appropriately.





# Preventing Illicit Discharge

Preventing stormwater pollution is the best-case scenario—stop the problem before it starts. Here are some ways you can help prevent discharges as you go about your day-to-day activities:

## Keep Outdoor Areas Clean

- Keep drum lids closed and secured tightly
- Store equipment with exposed oily/greasy parts in a covered area and off the ground
- Do not throw cigarette butts on the ground – put trash in dumpsters

## Be Mindful of What Goes Down the Drain

- No fats, greases, oils, chemicals, or toxins down ANY drain
- Pour cleaning water into a 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
- Maintain good housekeeping and a safe workspace
- Frequently check equipment for leaks
- Don't place liquids near a floor drain

# Reporting Illicit Discharges

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

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

**Call\*: Ande Remington (757.864.8332) or Jazmin Argarin (757.864.7031)**

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