

# ***Reporting Illicit Storm Water Discharge***

## ***What is stormwater and where does it originate from?***

Stormwater is water that comes from precipitation and ice/snow melt – it either soaks into exposed soil or remains on top of impervious surfaces, like pavement or rooftops. Stormwater will eventually evaporate off of a level surface, but most often it flows as runoff to another location.

## ***How does stormwater affect human health?***

Stormwater runoff that carries pollution can also affect human health. Many carcinogens, such as heavy metals that can have toxic effects on humans, are among the pollutants found in stormwater runoff. The contaminated water, carrying pathogens and harmful bacteria, can also be a source of water-borne illness.

## ***What causes an illicit discharge?***

Illicit discharges are defined as a storm drain that has measurable flow during dry weather containing pollutants and/or pathogens. A storm drain with measurable flow but containing no pollutants is simply considered a discharge.

There are many hazardous household products, yardcare products, fertilizers, dog waste, car soaps and automotive fluids that turn what should only be stormwater into an illicit discharge that pollutes and degrades local water quality. Which of the following is an example of an illicit discharge?

An illicit (illegal) discharge is any discharge to a municipal storm sewer system – storm drains, pipes, and ditches – that is not composed entirely of stormwater. Pollutants end up in storm sewer systems in a number of ways, many of which are easily preventable.

## ***Why is MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System) important?***

An MS4 reduces stormwater pollution in six ways.

Public education and outreach. Public involvement and participation. Illicit discharge detection and elimination. Construction site stormwater runoff control.

Stormwater pollution can include chemicals, fast food wrappers, cigarette butts, Styrofoam cups, sewage overflow, cooking oil, bacteria from pet waste, used motor oil, fertilizers, paint and construction debris.

**To Report an Illicit Discharge, please call 219-924-3838 or email [tricia.kistler@griffith.in.gov](mailto:tricia.kistler@griffith.in.gov)**

