

ILLCIT DISCHARGE? – WHO YA GONNA CALL?

Whether at home or at work, all individuals who live or work in the city can help to prevent and identify illicit discharges as they happen. The storm sewer system is designed to convey surface water runoff from natural precipitation. Any material entering into the storm sewer other than stormwater is considered an illicit discharge and is prohibited from entering the system.

It is important that any suspected illicit discharges are reported to the proper responders right away, as time is of the essence when it comes to protecting water quality from harmful chemicals, sewage or other illicit discharges. The responding party will vary depending on the location of the IDDE, its severity and quantity and the time of day when it's observed.

Examples of Common Illicit Discharge Sources:

- Yard waste
- Leaves and grass clippings
- Garbage or hazardous waste
- Animal waste
- Erosion and sediment control from construction projects
- Concrete or other construction washouts
- Dumping in storm drains
- Vehicle accidents
- Dumping on public land
- Sanitary sewer blockage or overflow
- Plumbing cross connections (sanitary to stormwater)

Not all discharges into the storm sewer system are considered illicit discharges. Section 515 of the City Code describes discharges that are exempt from the discharge prohibitions established by the ordinance and include such things as: water line flushing, irrigation water, foundation drains, air conditioning condensation, lawn watering, individual residential car washing, and street wash water.

City officials inspect, clean and repair storm drains at least once per year as a preventative measure, however, illicit discharge can happen anytime. Residents should contact city hall to report suspected illicit discharges, and be prepared to state exactly what they are seeing and where. When a complaint is received, city staff will contact the Public Works Director who will investigate the complaint and determine the appropriate action to take. The goal is to respond to an illicit discharge report in a timely manner. City field staff are trained annually on how to spot and report possible illicit discharges. There are levels of response based on the size of the discharge.

Bottom Line – if you see suspicious material like that shown in the photos below and that appears to be seeping into or near any storm drain, call City Hall immediately at 952-471-8878. If after hours, call 9-1-1.

