Stormwater Pollution and Illicit Discharges

Common Sources of Illicit Discharges

Dumping of mop buckets or other wash waters

Car wash wastewater

Improper used oil disposal

Using water to clean pavement

Improper disposal of auto and household toxic substances (transmission fluid, antifreeze, household cleaners, etc.)

What is an Illicit Discharge?

An illicit discharge occurs when something other than stormwater (runoff) enters a storm drainage system. The causes can be intentional, such as someone deliberately dumping automotive fluids, wastewater, or trash into a storm drainage inlet. Illicit discharges can be unintentional as well, such as leaving chemicals or pet waste in an area where stormwater may carry away the polluting material.

Why Should I Care?

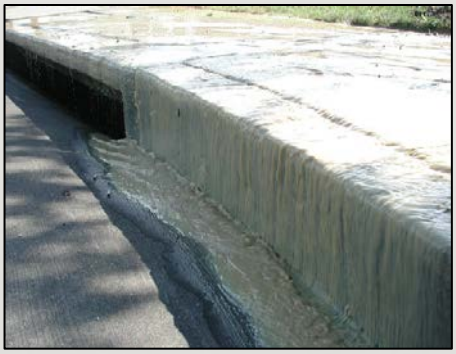
Illicit discharges contribute pollutants to stormwater, including heavy metals, toxics, oil and grease, solvents, nutrients, viruses, and bacteria to receiving water bodies. Pollutants in stormwater have been shown by EPA studies to be high enough to significantly degrade receiving water quality and threaten aquatic, wildlife, and human health.

It is also the law. NMSU is an operator of a small municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) which has authorization to discharge stormwater to surface water under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System General Permit Number NMR04000. Under this permit, NMSU must detect and eliminate illicit discharges.

Indicators of an Illicit Discharge

- During dry days, any water except irrigation water that is flowing into a grate in the ground, down the road, or into a drainage ditch or arroyo may be an illicit discharge.
- Trash, debris, or other material dumped into a storm drain, drainage way, or arroyo is an illicit discharge.

- Oil sheen on stormwater may indicate that oil or other hydrocarbon wastes have been added to the water through illegal dumping. Sheen can also indicate the presence of toxins.



  - Odd colored water (anything but clear) flowing into a grate in the ground, down the road, or into a drainage ditch or arroyo.
  - Algae, unhealthy fish, or discolored vegetation growing in the arroyos or drainage ditches.

What Can I Do?

- If you see evidence of an illicit discharge or evidence of dumping, or you think you have found an illicit discharge, please contact the NMSU Storm Water Management Program at **575-646-3327** or online at http://www.nmsu.edu/safety/suggestions.htm.
- Store materials that could pollute stormwater indoors or in waterproof containers that will not rust.
- Do not dump any substances such as used oil, cleaning supplies, or paint into the storm drain inlets, a drainage way, or onto the ground.
- Take all your used oil, cleaning supplies, paint, and other household hazardous waste to the Amador Avenue Recycling Center at 2825 W. Amador Avenue. **The center is open every day, except holidays**. Please call 575-528-3800 for hours.

What If I Want To Know More?

- NMSU's Stormwater Management Program website: http://www.ofs.nmsu.edu/SWMP.html
- EPA's Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination website: http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater/menuofbmps/index.cfm?action=min_measure&min_measure_id=3
- New Mexico Environment Department Stormwater Program website: http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/swqb/StormWater/ Las Cruces's Stormwater Pollution Information website: http://www.las-cruces.org/en/Departments/Public%20Works/Services/Project%20Development/Engineering%20Services/Stormwater%20Information.aspx
- Residential Household Hazardous Waste Recycling (used oil, paint, cleaning chemicals) : http://www.thescrappypages.com/recycling.php

Sources:

United States Environmental Protection Agency. 2005. Stormwater Phase II Final Rule– Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination Minimum Control Measure, EPA 833-F-00-007 [Fact Sheet] Available at http://www.epa.gov/npdes/pubs/fact2-5.pdf. December .

Center for Watershed Protection. 2011. Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination Presentations: Pollution Prevention. 2011

New Mexico State University. 2009. Storm Water Management Program for NPDES General Permit No. NMR040000. July.