

Business and Industry Guide to Chesterfield County's Illicit Discharge Ordinance

In 1997, Chesterfield County enacted an **Illicit Discharge Ordinance**, which makes it illegal to discharge pollutants to the storm sewer system or to County waters.

The County's Illicit Discharge Ordinance is mandated by the Clean Water Act. It is designed to help maintain and protect the quality of the water in our streams, lakes, and rivers.

What does the ordinance prohibit?

- *Directly discharging anything that is not composed entirely of stormwater* into the storm sewer system or into County waters is prohibited.
- *Connecting any structure that carries any liquid other than stormwater* to the storm sewer or to County waters also is prohibited.

You can report illicit discharges to the Chesterfield County Water Quality Section at **717-6161**

What is the penalty for a violation?

Anyone who *knowingly violates* the County's Illicit Discharge Ordinance can be found guilty of a *Class 1 misdemeanor*.

Inadvertent or *unknowing violations* can result in a civil penalty—a fine of \$250 to \$1,000.

Violators also will have to pay for the cost of testing, cleaning up, and disposal of their pollutants.

What does the ordinance allow?

The ordinance does not apply to discharges that are made under the terms of a Federal or State (NPDES or VPDES) permit or to discharges from fighting fires.

Certain everyday types of discharges are also allowed to continue. For example:

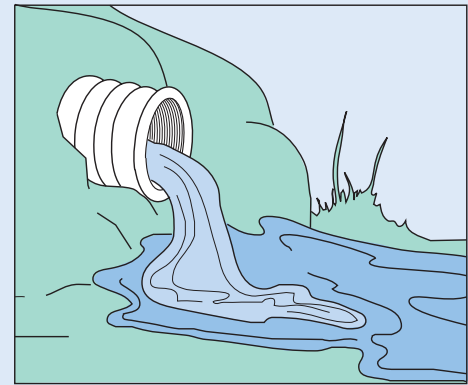
- Watering lawns and irrigating landscapes
- Flushing water lines
- Condensation from air conditioners



What is the County's storm sewer system?

Stormwater is the water from rain, melting snow or ice, which flows over the ground or pavement without soaking into the ground.

The storm sewer system includes the roadside ditches, gutters, inlets, catch basins, and underground pipes that collect stormwater and carry it away from our streets, parking lots, and yards.

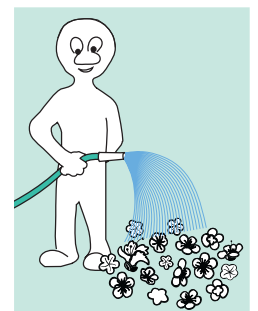


County waters include the creeks, lakes, and rivers in Chesterfield County. Stormwater can flow directly into these waters, so they are part of the storm sewer system, too.

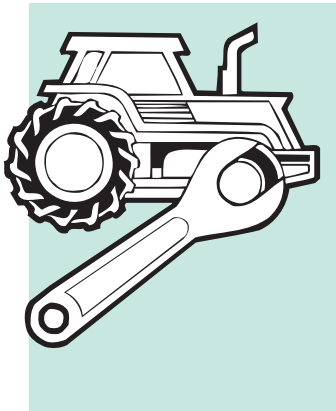
Did you know? Anything that is washed into the storm sewer system ends up in County waters. That's because, unlike the wastewater from our kitchens and bathrooms, stormwater is not treated before it's released into our waters.

- Water from crawl spaces and foundation drains
- Runoff from springs or drinking water sources
- Draining the water from a swimming pool, but *only after the water has been dechlorinated (usually 2 to 3 days after you last added chlorine—use a pool water test kit to be sure)*

However, if any of these activities are found to be causing water pollution, the County will ask that the activity be stopped or be conducted differently so that our waters are not polluted.



How can I prevent stormwater pollution in my workplace?



There are three general principles to remember:

1. Keep water from contacting work areas

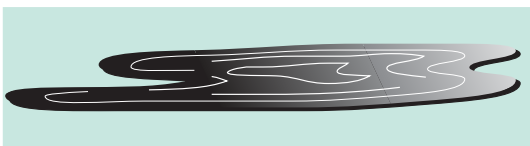
Work areas can be contaminated by raw materials, process liquids, grease, oily wastes, heavy metals, and miscellaneous fluids. Work areas include surfaces used for shipping, for storing outdoor equipment and materials, and for maintaining vehicles.

“Run-on stormwater” is water that flows across the working area. It picks up contaminants as it flows. If that water reaches a storm drain or ditch, those contaminants will be discharged to the County’s storm sewer system.

To keep from discharging contaminated stormwater, you need to keep water from flowing across these contaminated areas and running off into the storm sewer system. For example:

- Keep run-on stormwater from contacting any industrial areas, either indoors or out.
- Install roofs or move industrial operations indoors to keep rain from falling onto work areas.
- Avoid practices like hosing down outdoor areas or washing commercial vehicles where the dirty water will enter the storm sewer system.

2. Keep contaminants off surfaces that will come into contact with water



First, carefully look over your site to identify all areas that

might contact stormwater or other water that is discharged to the storm sewer system. Then, take special care to *keep contaminants off these areas*:

- Control all leaks and spills, even minor ones.
- Take a close look at your operating routines and your equipment to see whether any substances are exposed to stormwater that don’t need to be.
- Try to minimize the use of pesticides and herbicides (weed and insect killers). If you must use them, make sure you are using the right product in the right amount, follow all label instructions, and dispose of empty containers properly.

☛ For tips on using fertilizers and pesticides, call the County Extension Service at 751-4401.

☛ For information on disposal of pesticide containers, call the Solid Waste Department at 748-1297.

3. Educate workers about preventing stormwater pollution



The first two principles won’t work unless your coworkers are properly trained. *Workers need to understand that improper disposal of materials into the storm sewer system will pollute the County’s waters and could result in penalties.* People often do better if they understand why they are being asked to change their work methods.

Put up signs to inform and remind your coworkers. For example:

- Proper equipment washing procedures at designated washing areas
- “Close the cover” signs at dumpsters and other storage areas
- Reminders to not “top-off” or overfill fuel tanks

Preventing pollution is good for public relations



Let your customers know how you are minimizing wastes and recycling fluids, to show them that you are a good neighbor. Encourage your customers to do the same.

Showing your clients what you are doing to protect our waters can be good public relations for your business.

This is one of a series of fact sheets about surface water quality issues in Chesterfield County. The series is produced by the Water Quality Section of the Department of Environmental Engineering. Our mission is to protect, maintain, and restore the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of Chesterfield County’s waters in order to enhance the quality of life for County citizens.