

The Storm Drain System

The storm drain system is made up of pipes, ditches, gutters and storm drains that collect and funnel untreated stormwater (rain water) to local creeks, streams and other waterways. Stormwater enters this system through storm drain grates or inlets along roads, in parking lots and yards, or by running off directly into nearby waterways.

When stormwater comes in contact with pollutants such as yard chemicals, motor oil, paint, eroded soil and other substances, it becomes polluted runoff. This untreated polluted runoff is carried by the storm drain system directly into waterways. Polluted runoff can be reduced if we each make a few small behavior changes at home, work and play.

Improper Disposal

Improper disposal occurs when people do not properly discard trash, yard and household chemicals, debris, and other materials that they do not want. Instead, they improperly dump it in a location where it comes in contact with stormwater and enters the storm drain system. Local ordinances prohibit dumping.



Improper disposal causes poor water quality and is unlawful in Jefferson County!

Illicit Discharges

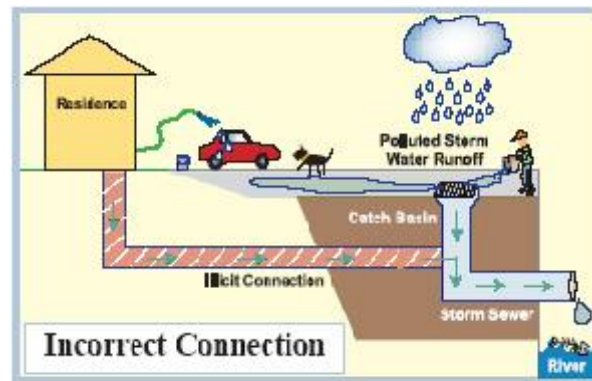
An **illicit discharge** is anything besides stormwater that enters the storm drain system. It can be intentional or unintentional, but it is illegal for anything but stormwater to enter the storm drain system. A few exceptions to the law are listed in this brochure.



Pouring dirty wash water or used motor oil into a storm drain grate is an illicit discharge

Illicit Connections

An **illicit connection** is disposing of waste water by deliberately or accidentally not connecting to the sanitary sewer, septic or other treatment system and conveying the waste water to the storm drain system or a waterway. Connecting washing machines, toilets, and other sources of waste water in this manner is illegal and potentially a health hazard.



The storm drain system should not have any flowing substances 3 or more days after it rains!

Complaint Hotline

Reporting what you see in your community is important to helping protect water quality!

Call 325.5792 to report a violation.

Please provide your name and daytime phone number so that we can contact you for further information. If you would like to be informed of the investigation results, let us know. Your name and contact information will remain confidential. Also include the following:

- Date and time the incident occurred.
- Type of complaint (polluted runoff, unlawful dumping, illicit discharge or connection).
- Location of the violation (address, nearby cross streets, identifying landmarks, business names, or waterways).
- Pollution type, quantity, color, consistency, odor, frequency, and origin and destination.

Immediately call 911 to report chemical spills or potentially hazardous items.

Authorized Discharges

Some discharges into the storm drain system are allowed, and are not considered to be violations even though they consist of something besides stormwater. Some examples are:

- Lawn and landscape irrigation
- Individual residential car washing
- Dechlorinated swimming pool water
- Air conditioning condensate
- Foundation or footing drains
- Water line flushing
- Potable water source discharges
- Water from crawl space pumps

How You Can Help

Pollution from stormwater runoff could be greatly reduced if each person living in our region would do just a few easy things to prevent its causes. Keeping vehicle fluids, yard debris, litter, and other materials out of the storm drain system is an important first step. Your part might seem small, but every little bit adds up to make a significant difference.

- Read and follow package label directions when using yard chemicals or household cleaners. Save money by only using the amount you really need.
- Fix or repair leaks on your vehicles and other equipment. Collect and recycle used oil.
- Properly dispose of or donate old paint.
- Pick up pet waste and discard in the trash.
- Capture rain water from your roof or downspouts for watering the lawn and inedible plants.
- Secure your loads when transporting items or materials before driving on roadways.
- Participate in Household Hazardous Waste Days to properly dispose of old cleaners, solvents, batteries, paint and other chemical waste.
- Schedule an educational program for your organization, event or neighborhood association. Call 325.8741.

If you see water pollution, unlawful dumping or an illicit connection to the storm drain system, call the **Complaint Hotline: 325.5792**

Learn more at:
www.jccal.org/ds

Report suspected water pollution.
Call the Complaint Hotline:
205.325.5792



Jefferson County Commission
Department of Development Services
Room B-200
Jefferson County Courthouse
716 Richard Arrington, Jr. Blvd. North
Birmingham, AL 35203

Identifying & Reporting Water Pollution



Jefferson County Stormwater Program

Department of Development Services
Room B-200
Jefferson County Courthouse
716 Richard Arrington Jr. Blvd North
Birmingham, AL 35203
205.325.8741