



New Mexico DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION
MOBILITY FOR EVERYONE

HELP PROTECT OUR MOST PRECIOUS RESOURCE: WATER

Drainage Design Bureau

Educational Brochure & Report Form



HELP PROTECT OUR MOST PRECIOUS RESOURCE: WATER

Storm drains and arroyos are for transporting rain water runoff. Keeping our stormwater channels clean helps keep our waters clean. Dumping any pollutants into storm drains or arroyos is an illicit discharge, is illegal, and is a violation of the EPA's Clean Water Act. Additionally, it is illegal to connect any unauthorized pipe, ditch, or other manmade structure to a storm drainage system (an illicit connection). Report illicit discharges, illicit connections, or spills by one of the methods listed at the end of this page. Reporting one of these can help prevent degradation of our precious waters and harm to the environment.

WHAT IS AN ILLICIT DISCHARGE?

An illicit discharge is the introduction of non-stormwater runoff, sewage, pollutants, or hazardous materials into the public stormwater system, such as catch basins, median drop inlets, ditches, or arroyos. Studies have shown that pollutant discharge from stormwater systems in dry weather due to illicit discharges can exceed the total pollutant flow from storm event flows. Stormwater systems flow untreated to natural water bodies and can directly affect water quality. Storm drains are there to collect stormwater runoff only. The dumping of oil, grease, dirty wash water, or in most cases anything at all into a storm drain is illegal and may cause severe damage to the environment. This includes solid waste, such as trash or yard debris.

WHAT ARE EXAMPLES OF AN ILLICIT DISCHARGE?

Examples of illicit discharges include: pet waste, changing oil or antifreeze over or near a storm structure, washing paint or construction waste down the storm drain, yard waste, leaking trash dumpsters, failing septic systems, overflowing grease traps, operational wash water, hazardous waste, and chemical spills.

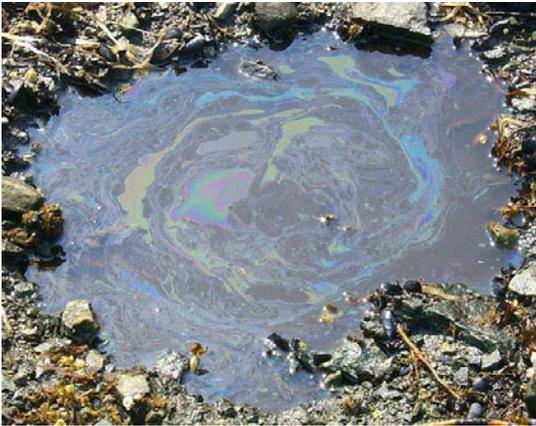
WHAT ARE SIGNS OF AN ILLICIT DISCHARGE?

Signs of an illicit discharge can include: staining, residues, oily substances, odors, dry weather flows, turbid (cloudy) waters, or suds.

Dry Weather Flow is observed when it has not rained for at least 72 hours and the storm drain has flow or the drain shows signs of intermittent flow (staining, odor).

Oil/Gas is recognized as sheen on the water. Natural sheens may be differentiated from an oil/gas sheen by swirling the sheen around in the water. If it re-attaches to itself, the sheen is oil/gas. Natural sheens will remain separated. Oil or gas enters water bodies via storm water runoff (spills while topping off at gas stations, oil leaks on pavement, etc.) and illegal dumping.

Sanitary Sewage may be present if there is black staining inside the drainage pipe; visible evidence of sanitary waste, such as toilet paper; or opaque or gray water. Sewage may originate from septic tank overflow pipes or improperly dumped travel trailer waste.



Oil/gas sheen (photo courtesy NCTCOG)



Pollutant suds (photo courtesy NCTCOG)



Wash water draining to a storm drain
(photo courtesy WSDOT)



Dark staining in waterway

WHAT IS NOT AN ILLICIT DISCHARGE?

Allowable discharges include: firefighting activities, water line or hydrant flush water, lawn water, swimming pool discharge (if not recently chlorine shocked), air conditioning condensate, street/sidewalk wash water, dust control water, individual residential car washing, or irrigation water from agricultural sources.

Natural sheens may appear as discrete blocks with sharp edges, and when broken up will remain separated, while oil/gas sheens will reattach themselves and appear smoother.

Natural suds or foam is only associated with high flows at the “drop off” and will not persist downstream.



Natural sheen (photo courtesy NCTCOG)



Natural foam (photo courtesy NCTCOG)

WHAT IS AN ILLICIT CONNECTION?

An illicit connection is any unauthorized pipe, ditch, or other manmade structure that is physically connected to NMDOT's property or drainage system, which allows the discharge of non-stormwater to the storm drain system. Examples of possible illicit connections include: Floor drains going into the storm drain system, pipe from a washing machine tying into storm drain structure, a sewer service pipe tying into a storm structure, septic or sewer connections.



A surface hose discharging into a storm drain inlet.
This may be an illicit connection.
(photo courtesy WSDOT)

WHAT IS A SPILL?

A spill is a single-event, unintentional or intentional release of a non-stormwater substance to NMDOT's roadway, property, or stormwater drainage system. Many times they are associated with emergency situations such as an automobile accident spilling oil or other automotive fluids onto the highway surface and potentially flowing into the stormwater drainage system.

For spills on state highways THAT IMPACT THE SAFETY OF THE TRAVELING PUBLIC or the environment, such as spills related to vehicle accidents, fires, unknown chemicals, or an explosion hazard, **CALL 911**. For all other spills, please use one of the reporting methods listed below.

ILLICIT DISCHARGE, ILLICIT CONNECTION, OR SPILL REPORT FORM

IF THIS IS A SPILL OR DISCHARGE THAT IS IMMEDIATELY ENDANGERING THE LIFE OR SAFETY OF MOTORISTS CALL 911!

You can submit a report one of three ways:

- 1) Email: Copy the form below to the clipboard (highlight the text, select Edit from the menu bar, then Copy). Click on this link nmdot.idde@state.nm.us. Paste the copied form into the body of your email (select Edit from the menu bar, then Paste). Fill out the information in the form. Send the email.
- 2) Postal mail: Fill in the form below. You will not be able to save the completed form, but you will be able to print it out. Print out the form. Mail it to:
IDDE, Rm. 201, Environment Bureau, NMDOT, PO Box 1149, Santa Fe, NM 87507-1149
- 3) Telephone: call 505-470-4967

Fill out the form as completely as possible. Not all fields will be relevant for all cases. Leave blank any fields that you don't know or that don't apply. The more information you provide the better we can respond. We will contact you only if we need more information regarding this issue.

* Indicates required field

* Date of observation:

Time of observation:

* Description of problem (Is there an obvious source? Is there an odor? What color is it? How many gallons?):

Event/observation Location

Business name:

Street address (including city):

* Highway/Road:

County:

Mile marker:

Driving directions:

* Specific location (median, ditch, which side of highway, etc.):

Contact Information

Your name:

Your preferred contact method: Your telephone number (###-###-####):

Your email: