

ILLICIT CONNECTIONS

PROBLEMS WITH ILLICIT CONNECTIONS

Illicit connections are connections of the sanitary sewers to the storm sewer system. The storm sewer system is designed to carry the excess water that flows over land during and after a rainfall directly to a river, stream, or lake (stormwater). The sanitary sewer system carries sewage from residential, commercial, institutional and industrial sources to the wastewater treatment plant. Illicit connections allow untreated sanitary water to be discharged to natural waterways without proper treatment. A typical example of an illicit connection is a cross- connect of a floor drain to the storm sewer in an auto-repair facility.

POLLUTANTS

Illicit connections cause pollutants to be released to waterways instead of being removed by a wastewater treatment plant. Typical pollutants found in flows coming from illicit connections include:

- Ammonia
- Chlorine
- Detergents
- Heavy Metals
- Nutrients
- Oil and Grease
- Potassium
- Raw Sewage
- Solids

Raw sewage typically includes fecal bacteria, which may cause public health concerns, and toxic compounds such as heavy metals, which may harm aquatic life.

DRY WEATHER

Discharges from illicit connections occur during dry weather, as well as wet weather. During dry weather, negative impacts to waterways can be severe because the discharge is not diluted in the storm sewers before it reaches the stream. In addition to presenting a public health threat and a risk to aquatic life, illicit connections can damage the aesthetic quality of the waterway because of unpleasant odors and color.