



Stormwater Management Program News

Business Edition 2024

ILLICIT DISCHARGE

An illicit discharge is technically anything other than stormwater entering the City's storm sewer system. Our storm sewer system includes our City streets, alleys, storm drains, pipes, culverts, and drainages.

Some non-stormwater discharges are allowed or are exempted from enforcement. Allowed discharges include discharges from emergency fire-fighting activities or discharges covered by a permit from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE).

Discharges exempted from enforcement include flows such as overflow from landscape or lawn watering; irrigation, groundwater or springs; potable water and water line flushing; foundation/footing and air conditioning drains; uncontaminated pumped water from crawl spaces; residential car washing; draining of pools as long as the water is dechlorinated; water from street sweeping; and agricultural stormwater runoff.

Stormwater is not treated like sanitary wastewater is before it enters the Arkansas River or Four Mile Creek. It is in the City's and residents' best interests to try to keep pollutants out of stormwater runoff to the best of our ability in order to protect the quality of our water resources.



City of Cañon City

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The Cañon City Stormwater Program is providing information on illicit discharges, tips to prevent the discharges, and procedures to address them as recently there have been a few incidents involving accidental spills of used cooking oil and automotive fluids.

Prevention Tips for Businesses: Not all of these tips will apply to every type of business, but each business can use some or all of them to help keep potential pollutants from entering our storm sewer system.

- **Trash Disposal:** Keep dumpster lids closed at all times to prevent trash from becoming wind-borne and to keep animals out. Schedule extra pick ups if the dumpster becomes too full between regularly scheduled pick ups.
- **Outdoor Housekeeping:** Sweep sidewalks and outdoor areas rather than hosing them down or powerwashing them. Use dry absorbent material such as kitty litter, sand, or other commercial absorbents to soak up spills or drips like oil, grease, or chemicals. Sweep up the absorbent and dispose of it in the trash. **Powerwashing and wet cleaning methods can only be used if the following requirements are met.**
 - All wastewater from powerwashing or hosing down the area must be trapped on your property; it cannot enter the street, alley, or storm drains. It's recommended that only small areas be done at a time using a minimal amount of water. The water can be allowed to evaporate and any residue can be swept up and disposed of in the trash. Do not use detergents or soaps.
 - The water can be blocked from leaving the property and vacuumed up with a wet vac. This water can then be disposed of in the sanitary sewer as long as it does not contain grease, oil, or harmful chemicals.
 - The water can be directed into a vegetated area, such as a tree well, provided that it does not contain anything harmful to the vegetation and that the water will not pool or spill over into the street.
 - Be aware that these requirements also apply to wastewater from window washing and cleaning of bar or kitchen mats. Mats should be cleaned indoors, not on the sidewalk, alley, or street.
- **For restaurants and businesses that use fats, oils, and grease:** Keep outdoor used grease/oil receptacles covered at all times. If your container does not have a lid, please request one from your disposal company. Monitor the area around the container for spills and drips; use absorbent to clean up when observed. Sweep up the absorbent and place in the garbage. Consider installing secondary containment around the container if there is room. Secondary containment can consist of curbs, tubs, catchment basins, or double-walled tanks to collect any spills and drips. Do not place containers on or near storm drains unless secondary containment is provided. Never dump grease, oil, fats, or other liquid waste in dumpsters designed for solid waste as these are not leak-proof.

- Employee Training is a vital part of preventing stormwater pollution. Employees should be properly trained on procedures including trash disposal, wastewater disposal such as mop water, oil and grease disposal and clean up, and outdoor housekeeping protocols.

What to do in the event of a spill or discharge:

If the discharge is suspected of being a hazardous substance, call 911 immediately.

- Stay upwind from the area and keep people out of the area.
- Be prepared to tell the emergency dispatcher if there are any injuries or exposures to the substance.
- Other information which should be relayed if applicable includes size of spill, color of material, any smoke or vapors, and size or type of containers, or vehicle involved in the spill.

If the spill is not a hazardous substance, but is more than you can address:

- Call the emergency dispatch at 911. The dispatcher will notify the Fire Department and on-call personnel.
- Or you may contact the Cañon City Stormwater Program directly at 719.276.5265.
- Block the leading edge of the spill with sand, absorbant, or other items which will contain the flow.

If the spill is small or just drips:

- Spread kitty litter, sand, or commercial absorbants on it, allow the material to soak into the absorbent, then sweep it up and dispose of it in the garbage.
- Never hose down a spill; the water will just cause it to spread further and increase the chance of the material entering the storm sewer system.
- Spills of dry materials should also be swept up immediately and disposed of.

The City of Cañon City is required, through its Stormwater Discharge Permit from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), to effectively prohibit illicit discharges to its storm sewer system. When an illicit discharge is identified or reported, we must remove or require the removal of the source of the discharge. We must also remove or require the removal of all surface residue after the source has been stopped and cleaned up.

The City has procedures in place to ensure the removal and clean up of illicit discharges. These procedures include identifying, if possible, the party responsible and requiring that party to perform the clean up and disposal of the discharge material. If the party cannot be identified, or if the spill poses an immediate threat to public health and safety, the City can perform the clean up. Once the responsible party is identified, they will be assessed the cost incurred by City personnel to perform the removal, clean up, and disposal of the material.

Other enforcement measures can be used on an escalating or concurrent scale. These may include verbal notification of the requirement to clean up the discharge, written Notice of Non-compliance, and/or Notice of Violation with a fine or abatement cost, if applicable. Fines of \$250.00 dollars per day per violation can be assessed from the day the discharge was observed or reported to the day it is removed and clean up completed. If warranted, criminal penalties and charges may be issued.

Illicit Discharge Examples



Used Cooking Oil



Power Washing



Vehicle Leak



Power Washing with Soap

“When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe.” – John Muir

Please feel free to direct any concerns or questions to Glenda DeBekker, City of Cañon City Stormwater Program at either 719.276.5265 or grdebekker@canoncity.org.