Phase II Stormwater Program

Spring 2017

Illicit Discharges!

What is an Illicit Discharge?

An Illicit Discharge is defined as any discharge, unless specifically exempted, not composed entirely of stormwater. Illicit Discharges typically enter the Storm Sewer Systems through an unwarranted connection. Stormwater conveyance systems are sometimes employed illegally as an inexpensive and/or convenient alternative to proper disposal of waste or wastewater. These illegal disposals can occur as illicit connections from commercial or business establishments, private residences or directly dumping into storm drain inlets.

Are all Non-Stormwater Discharges Illicit?

It is important to note that there are many non-storm water discharges that are not considered illicit discharges. These include water line flushing, landscape irrigation and irrigation water, diverted stream flows, rising ground waters, uncontaminated ground water infiltration, uncontaminated pumped ground water, discharges from potable water sources, foundation drains, air conditioning condensation, springs, water from crawl space pumps, footing drains, lawn watering, individual residential car washing, street wash water, water used for fire fighting, flows from riparian habitats and wetlands, dechlorinated swimming pool discharges (usually 10 days after you last added chorine — use a pool water test kit to be sure.).

Although allowed, if any of these activities prove to be a significant pollution hazard, the activity will be stopped and the discharge method modified to protect the environment.

What is a Stormwater Conveyance System?

Stormwater is the water from rain which flows over the ground or pavement without soaking into the ground. The storm-water conveyance system includes roadside ditches, gutters, inlets, catch basins and underground pipes that collect stormwater and carry it away from streets, parking lots and yards.

Is There a Regulation Regarding Illicit Discharges?

On February 7, 2017, the City Council passed Ordinance No. 2017-01, amending the Code of Ordinances of the City of Phenix City, Alabama, adding Chapter 10 ½ Stormwater Management, to regulate discharges and connections to the storm sewer system within the corporate limits of the City. A copy of this ordinance is available on the City's website, www.phenixcityal.us.

How Can I prevent Stormwater Pollution?

We can all play a large role in controlling Illicit Discharges as follows:

1. Do not dump leaves and grass clippings into ditches, storm inlets or creeks. Gather leaves and grass clippings and place them in an appropriate location for collection.
2. Do not pour motor oil, antifreeze or any other chemicals down storm inlets. One quart of oil can contaminate 250,000 gallons of water. If you spill oil or any other fluids, do not hose or wash off the spill. Instead, spread kitty litter to absorb the spill, then sweep it up into a bag and put it in the trash.
3. Minimize the use of pesticides and herbicides (insect and weed killers). Some of the products are deadly to fish, birds and other wildlife. If you use them, be sure to use the right product and the right amount. Excessive watering or rainfall will cause these chemicals to be washed into waterways when not applied properly.
4. If you plan on fertilizing your lawn, contact the County Extension Service for a soil test kit. The results of the test will help you determine the proper nutrient needs of your lawn and eliminate unnecessary or excessive fertilizers.
5. Take advantage of recycling opportunities. The City offers two (2) locations at 1100 Airport Road and 709 12th Street. The public can recycle aluminum, cardboard, paper, steel, tin and plastics (#1, #2 or #5 only).
6. Failing septic systems can discharge inadequately treated sewage that may contaminate surface and ground water. This discharge contains bacteria and viruses that can be harmful to humans and aquatic habitats. Schedule periodic inspections and maintenance to make sure the system is functioning properly. This will help reduce the potential for environmental impacts.