

# Guide to Avoiding Illicit Discharges to Protect Water Quality

Stormwater rules and regulations protect streams and lakes from pollution. Under the City's Stormwater Management Ordinance, it is **unlawful to discharge pollutants to storm drains, ditches, surface waters, or upon the land in a manner and amount that is likely to reach a stormwater conveyance system or waters of the US**. Many materials should **not be left outside exposed** to the environment where stormwater can wash them into the drainage system thereby polluting streams and lakes. This guide is intended to help residents and businesses in the City of Monroe understand what is, and is not, allowed under the City's Stormwater Management Ordinance.

## What materials are prohibited from entering the drainage system?

Any liquid, solid, gas, or other substance, other than stormwater. Stormwater is runoff from precipitation that flows over land and does not soak into the ground.

## How do illicit discharges typically enter the drainage system, contributing to pollution?

People and businesses can intentionally cause or inadvertently allow the discharge, emission, disposal, pouring, or pumping illicit materials directly or indirectly to:

- Any stormwater conveyance system (storm drain inlets, street gutters, ditches)
- Creeks, streams, ponds or lakes
- Anywhere on land where the material can be picked up by runoff during storms



Drainage systems are designed to reduce localized flooding. Storm drains discharge to local waterways **without treatment**.

## What is allowed to discharge to the drainage system? **Clean stormwater is allowed!**

In certain cases, non-stormwater discharges are allowed, provided they do not significantly impact water quality:

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| • Water line flushing                                 | • Foundation drains                                 | • Lawn watering                                   |
| • Landscape irrigation                                | • Air conditioning condensation                     | • Individual residential and charity car washing, |
| • Diverted stream flows                               | • Irrigation waters (not including reclaimed water) | • Flows from riparian habitats and wetlands       |
| • Rising ground waters                                | • Springs   | • Dechlorinated swimming pool discharge           |
| • Uncontaminated ground water (infiltrated or pumped) | • Water from crawl space pumps                      | • Street wash water                               |
| • Potable water sources                               | • Footing drains                                    | • Flows from emergency fire fighting              |

*Note: Other non-stormwater discharges for which a valid NPDES discharge permit has been approved and issued by the State of NC is allowed, provided that any such discharges to the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System are authorized by the City of Monroe Engineering Department.*

## What are some examples of materials that should not be discharged and may be considered Illicit Discharges?

- |                  |   |                          |                              |
|------------------|---|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| • Trash & litter | • Motor oil & auto fluids               | • Paint & paint removers | • Pet waste                  |
| • Cleaners       | • Cooking oil & grease                  | • Concrete washout       | • Sewage                     |
| • Soap           | • Pesticides                            | • Dumpster leakage       | • Septage                    |
| • Laundry water  | • Fertilizer                            | • Salt/brine             | • Soil, sand & mud           |
| • Mop water      | • Yard waste, leaves, & grass clippings | • Chlorinated pool water | • Pressure wash water*       |
|                  |   | • Filter backwash        | • Commercial car wash water* |

*\*If not properly contained, collected and/or treated. See "Best Management Practices for Vehicle Washing, Pressure Washing, Equipment Washing and Other Outdoor Surface Cleaning Operations" publication.*

## Are there penalties and fines involved?

Yes, violators of the City's Stormwater Management Ordinance are subject to civil and/or criminal penalties.

## How can I find out more about Illicit Discharges and protection of surface waters?

Visit <https://www.monroenc.org/Departments/Engineering/Stormwater-Services/Illicit-Discharge> or contact our Stormwater Compliance Coordinator at 704-282-4535.

**To report an Illicit Discharge, call the Stormwater Hotline 704-282-4515**

