



# Guide to Okaloosa County Illicit Discharge Ordinance

## Illicit Discharge Education for Employees

Okaloosa County has in place an **Illicit Discharge Ordinance #11-16**, which makes it illegal to discharge pollutants to the storm sewer system or to large receiving waters like bayous, bays or the Gulf.

The County's Illicit Discharge Ordinance is required by the Clean Water Act. It is designed to help maintain and protect the quality of the water in our streams, lakes and rivers.

### What does the ordinance prohibit'?

*Directly discharging anything that is not composed entirely of stormwater into the storm sewer system or into County waters is prohibited.*

*Connecting any structure that carries any liquid other than stormwater to the storm sewer or to County waters also is prohibited.*

### Penalties can be applied for a violation

Both illicit discharges and illegal connections violate County Ordinance 11-16. Violators are subject to substantial penalties as provided by Florida Statutes Chapter 162. Violators also will have to pay for the cost of testing, cleaning up, and disposal of their pollutants. The Okaloosa County Code Enforcement officers are empowered to enforce the Ordinance on behalf of the Board of County Commissioners.

**Report Illicit Discharges at 850-689-5772**

### Examples of what the ordinance allows

**Uncontaminated** pumped ground water, **foundation** or **footing drains**, **crawl space pumps**, **air conditioning** condensation and any other water source not containing pollutants. **Discharges or flows from firefighting**, and other discharges specified in writing by the BCC as being necessary to protect public health and safety.

However, if any of these activities are found to be causing water pollution, the County will ask that the activity be stopped or be conducted differently so that our waters are not polluted.

### Examples of what is not allowed

**Pools contain chlorine.** Drain PH neutral Swimming Pool water with no traces of chemicals across the lawn instead of connecting to the County Stormwater system.

**Roof drains** should not be connected to the Stormwater system and should be flowing over the grass in your yard.

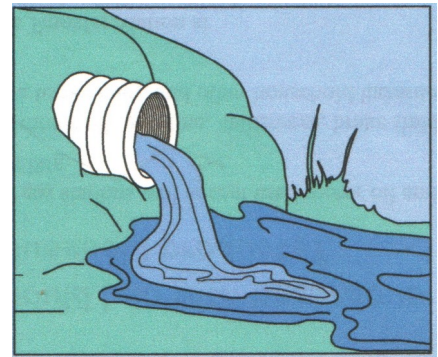
**Washing cars** on grass eliminates runoff.

**Chemicals, Oils and Paint** should not be dumped in the Stormwater system, they should always be recycled.

### What is the County Storm Sewer system?

**Stormwater** is the water from a rainfall event which flows over the ground or pavement without soaking into the ground.

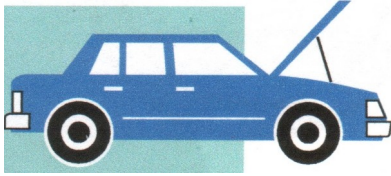
The storm sewer system includes roadside ditches, gutters, inlets, catch basins, and underground pipes that collect stormwater and convey it from our streets, parking lots, and yards.



**Receiving waters** include wetlands, creeks, lakes, and rivers in Okaloosa County. Stormwater can flow directly into these waters, so they are part of the storm sewer system, too.

**Did you know?** Anything that is washed into the storm sewer system ends up in receiving waters. That's because, unlike the wastewater from our kitchens and bathrooms, stormwater is not treated before it's released into our waters.

## How can I prevent stormwater pollution at home?



Never dump motor oil, antifreeze, or any other chemicals down the storm drain. *One quart of oil can contaminate 250,000 gallons of water!*

If you spill motor oil or other fluids, don't hose the spill into the gutter or ditch. Instead, spread kitty litter to absorb the spill, then sweep it up and put it in the trash.



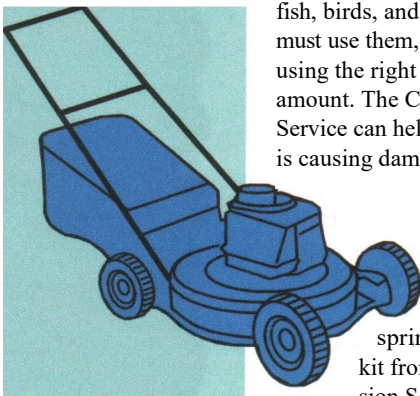
Inspect and maintain your car to keep oil, antifreeze, and other fluids from leaking.

Brushes used with water-based (latex) paint should be rinsed *in the sink*. If you have a small amount of paint left in the can, stuff it loosely with newspaper, let the paint dry out completely, and put it in the trash.



Save and reuse paint thinner and turpentine whenever you can. Leftover paint and paint thinner can be taken to a HHW facility for disposal.

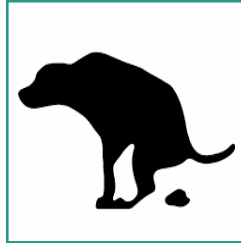
Try to *minimize your use of pesticides and herbicides* (insect and weed killers). They may be deadly to fish, birds, and other wildlife. If you must use them, make sure you are using the right product and the right amount. The County Extension Service can help you find out what is causing damage to your plants.



It's better to *fertilize your lawn in the fall* than in the spring. First, get a soil test kit from the County Extension Service to find out what nutrients your yard really

needs. Look for low phosphate fertilizers. Most mature lawns need more nitrogen than phosphate.

*... For tips on using fertilizers and pesticides, other ways to control pests, soil testing, and other lawn and gardening problems, call the County Extension at 850-689-5850.*



Put pet waste in a plastic bag and dispose of it in the trash can, or flush it down the toilet. When pet waste is left on the ground, harmful bacteria can be carried away by stormwater to contaminate our streams.

Please *don't dump leaves and grass clippings* into ditches, storm drains, or creeks. They clog storm sewers, which can cause flooding. Decaying leaves and grass add excess nutrients to our waters, which can cause algae to grow too fast and kill fish.



Compost your leaves and grass clippings, and use the compost to enrich and condition your soil. Or, you can put your leaves out for collection or take them to a County transfer station.

## What should I do with hazardous household products?

In an effort to divert hazardous waste from local landfills and dispose of these items responsibly through recycling and reuse, Okaloosa County accepts a variety of household hazardous wastes (HHW). This includes, but is not limited to: paints, pesticides, used oil, oil filters, pool chemicals, batteries, gas, solvents, paint products, tar, automotive chemicals, fluorescent bulbs, smoke alarms, fire extinguishers, computer monitors, etc., and is free of charge to residential customers.

Main HHW Facility - Fort Walton Beach (south county), 80 Ready Ave: FREE drop-off for local residents every Tuesday through Saturday from 7am - 3pm, no appointment necessary. For information call 850-301-2013.

Drop Off Facility - Crestview, (north county) 1759 S. Ferdon Blvd.: Hazardous waste can be dropped off Monday through Friday, 7 AM until 4 PM, for information call 850-301-2013.

This is a fact sheet about surface water quality issues in Okaloosa County. This is produced by the Okaloosa County Public Works Department, Stormwater Division. Our mission is to protect, maintain, and restore the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of Okaloosa County waters in order to enhance the quality of life for County citizens.