# **Jefferson County Illicit Discharges**



What is an illicit discharge and what should you do?

### **Background**

Our storm sewer system is designed to carry runoff from rain and snowmelt and discharge it directly to waterways. Materials that are dumped or inadvertently washed into our system can pollute our surface water. An illicit discharge occurs when an activity results in an unauthorized substance entering our storm sewer system.

Jefferson County is responsible for what flows through our storm sewer system even if the pollutants originate on private property. The storm sewer system includes both concrete and metal infrastructure, as well as roadside ditches that convey stormwater. The county is required to have and follow procedures to address illicit discharges into the storm sewer system.

## **Actual Examples**

Examples of illicit discharges include intentionally dumping or accidentally spilling materials into waterways or in ditches. The following are recent local examples of illegal activities that harm our water.

Jefferson County is responsible for responding to these types of events:



Landscaping piles must be placed on the property and contained.



- 1. Landscapers often leave compost and topsoil piles in the street for future landscaping activities. The compost and topsoil flow into the storm sewer system and are discharged to a detention pond or a creek. This fills in the detention pond, which decreases the flood control volume, and the nutrient loading creates algae blooms in the pond and waterway.
- 2. A swimming pool owner sandblasts paint off the pool walls and releases the paint residue and pool water onto the street where it washes into a street inlet and enters a creek.
- **3.** A restaurant worker dumps waste grease into a parking lot drain that connects to a reservoir used for drinking water.
- **4.** A homeowner washes paint brushes off in the street where the colored paint travels to a street inlet and discharges to the neighborhood waterway along a bike path.
- **5.** A mobile power washer pressure washes a dirty parking lot and the oil, grease, metals, salt and sand on the parking lot washes directly into the creek adjacent to the parking lot.

**6.** A concrete truck at a construction site dumps the remaining concrete liquid on a lot that drains to a waterway. Concrete waste has a pH of 12-14 (similar to Drano) and is

harmful to animals and people that contact the water.

#### **Prevention**

Water pollution is harmful to wildlife and expensive for us because added pollution increases drinking water treatment costs. Always keep a solid waste, such as pet waste or food grease, contained and disposed of appropriately. Liquid wastes such as concrete washout must be contained and allowed to dry, then should be disposed of properly. Other liquid wastes such as power wash water must be contained, wet vacuumed and taken to a permitted wastewater disposal facility.



# parking lot drains to creek.

# **Reporting Procedures**

The above examples are violations under **Colorado Revised Statues: Section 18-4-511** Littering of public or private property. If you see evidence of an activity similar to the ones listed above, please follow the following procedures:

Call the Sheriff's Department (303.277.0211) if you believe the matter is an urgent water quality concern, for example something unusual in a ditch or waterway such as colored water, the appearance of a fuel slick or a suspicious material on the land that could wash into the storm drain system.

If you notice something that is not urgent (it can wait until the next day), please call the Jefferson County Planning and Zoning Division (303.271.8700).

For additional information please contact: Jefferson County Planning and Zoning, 303.271.8700 http://planning.jeffco.us