



Guide to Okaloosa County Illicit Discharge Ordinance

Okaloosa County Public Works

Okaloosa County enacted an **Illicit Discharge Ordinance #11-16**, which makes it illegal to discharge pollutants to the storm sewer system or to County waters.

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.

What is the penalty 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. 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

What does the ordinance allow?

Discharges from several everyday activities are allowed to flow into storm sewers or County waters.

For example:

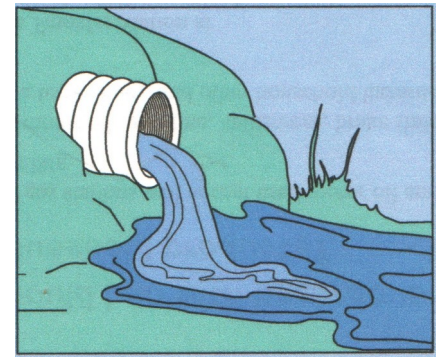
Draining the water from a swimming pool, but *only after the water has been dechlorinated (usually 2 to 3 days after you last added chlorine-use a pool water test kit to be sure)*

- Washing cars *only at home*
- Watering lawns and irrigating landscapes

What is the County Storm Sewer system?

Stormwater is the water from the rain which flows over the ground or pavement without soaking into the ground.

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



County waters include the 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 County waters. That's because, unlike the wastewater from our kitchens and bathrooms, stormwater is not treated before it's released into our waters.

Flushing water lines

Water from crawl spaces and foundation drains

Condensation from air conditioners

Runoff from springs or drinking water sources

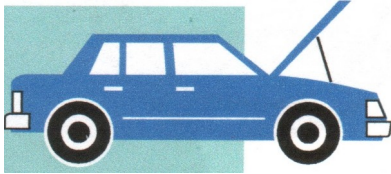
Discharges from fighting fires

Discharges that are allowed under the terms of a Federal or State permit

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.



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.



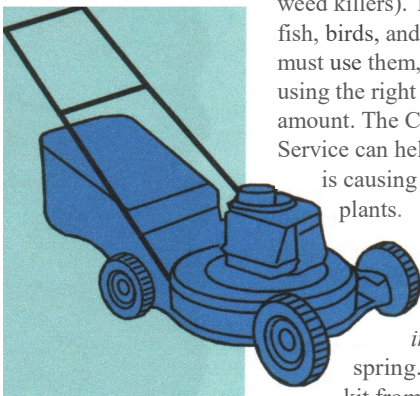
Inspect and maintain your car to keep oil, antifreeze, and other fluids from leaking.

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 County transfer station for disposal.

Try to *minimize your use of pesticides and herbicides* (insect and weed killers). They are 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 Service at 751-4401**.



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. 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.

In Fort Walton Beach (south), 80 Ready Ave: **FREE Drop-off** for local residents every Tuesday thru Saturday from 7am - 3pm, no appointment necessary. For information call 850-301-2013.

In 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 one of a series of fact sheets about surface water quality issues in Okaloosa County. The series is produced by the Water Quality Section of the Department of Environmental Engineering. 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.