



Illicit Discharge Controls

A common problem with City of Centralia's stormwater drainage system is illegal hook-ups to the system. Many businesses and residences hooked internal building drains, sump overflows, and even sanitary sewer and septic system piped to the storm drain in the past, allowing a variety of pollutants to flow directly to receiving waters instead of the sanitary sewer or septic system.

Frequently, these connections are unknown to the current owner, and do not appear on any plans for the site. Because of the pollution potential these connections represent, the Environmental Protection Agency, under the mandate of the NPDES stormwater permits, has made elimination of illegal connections a top priority.

All businesses and residences in City of Centralia must examine their plumbing systems to determine if illegal connections exist. We recommend starting with site plans to better understand what piping systems were initially installed, making piping that does not appear on the plan a priority for investigation. Wherever toilets, sinks, appliances, showers and bathtubs, floor drains, or other indoor activities are connected to the stormwater drainage system, immediately reroute them to the sanitary or septic system or holding tanks.

If sanitary facilities (such as toilets) are connected to the stormwater drainage system, you must obtain a permit from the City of Centralia and reroute them to the sanitary sewer. Contact City of Centralia Community Planning & Development for permit and connection information.

Dye Testing

Dye testing with a non-toxic dye is one way to determine where a pipe or structure drains if not obvious by observations or on plans. The dye is put into the structure and flushed with some water. Observations are then made at ends-of-pipes, drainage ditches, catch basins, and manholes to look for the color coming through. Contact City of Centralia Public Works - Wastewater Department if you need assistance in locating structures adjacent to your property.

Smoke Testing

Smoke testing can also help detect illegal connections and is best done by qualified personnel. To conduct smoke testing, shut off all indoor discharges, place a smoke bomb or other smoke-generating device in a storm drain manhole, and force air in after it. Station personnel at each suspect drain location to observe if smoke is coming out. Identify smoking drains for future rerouting.

Plugging or Rerouting Illicit Discharges

Drains that are found to connect to the stormwater drainage system must either be permanently plugged or disconnected and rerouted as soon as possible. Plug unused drains with concrete or similar permanent materials. If a drainpipe is to be rerouted and a sanitary sewer services the property, then the local sewer provider must be contacted. It is the responsibility of the property owner to follow through on rerouting illicit storm drainage connections to the sanitary sewer.

If the property is not served by a sanitary sewer, alternate measures will be necessary. If the discharge is simply domestic waste, a septic system may be feasible. If it is necessary to install a septic system, the proper permits will need to be obtained. If the discharge is anything other than domestic waste, then a holding tank or onsite treatment will be necessary.