

# The Right Hook-Up for Water Quality



**I**llegal discharge of pollution into a city's storm sewer system is known as illicit discharge. Illicit discharge happens in two ways:

1. **Dumping pollutants down storm drains**
2. **Connecting wastewater pipes to a storm sewer system**

Both of these activities pollute our water by carrying contaminants to the stream through the storm sewer system. Also, connecting your gutter downspouts to the storm sewer can result in overloading the system causing backups and overflow sewage. This kind of activity, whether intentional or unknown, is becoming a significant source of pollution and has a negative impact on our water quality and stream life. It is a good practice to assume that all storm sewer drainage goes straight to the stream, not a treatment plant.

PROBLEM	ALTERNATIVE
Blowing leaves, grass clippings, salt, fertilizer, and other yard waste down the storm drain.	Sweep up and compost large yard waste, dispose of safe chemicals in trash, and sweep or blow fertilizer and grass clippings back into yard.
Dumping cleaning supplies, oil, paint, fuel, batteries, trash, car fluids, pesticides or any other chemical down the storm drain.	Take all unused chemical products to a waste management facility. Washing your car on your lawn traps pollutants by filtering them through the soil and also waters your grass. Also, when draining swimming pool water, you can de-chlorinate the water or drain slowly into the grass.
Liquids are discharged to the storm sewer such as used water from sinks, tubs, washers, floor drains and other household drains; and also failing septic systems, broken sewer lines and sewage pipes that are connected to the storm sewer.	Ensure that used water (gray water) is piped to the sanitary sewer to be treated. Repair/replace failing septic systems, or connect up to city sanitary sewer system.  Disconnecting downspouts and draining run off into grass away from house, rain barrels or gardens decreases stream bank erosion.

In general, excess nutrients from yard waste and fertilizer decrease the oxygen in the water that is needed for life in the stream. Toxins, metals, oil, and bacteria from the other activities poison the water making it unsafe for people and wildlife.

For more information, visit [www.thecleanwaterbusiness.com](http://www.thecleanwaterbusiness.com). ●