**Illicit Discharge Article – Template**

Illicit discharge, or illegal dumping, is often a hidden offense and may even seem like no big deal – but it is a hazard for humans, the environment, and wildlife. Illicit discharge also hurts public infrastructure by placing more stress, demand, and extra maintenance costs onto local drainage systems.

So what exactly is it? Illicit discharge is a fancy phrase that boils down to “only rain down the drain.” Stormdrains and ditches are designed for stormwater runoff, and there is no treatment facility between the street and the end destination – a lake, stream, or wetland.

This means that everyone has the potential to protect water and infrastructure from anywhere in [City/Township name]. Examples of illicit discharge include:

* Trash, furniture, or construction debris such as drywall mud
* Chemicals, paint, or water softener salt
* Grass and lawn care clippings
* Mop bucket water, carpet cleaning water, or pool water

Visit \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ County Hazardous Waste for more info on proper disposal.

What to look for to be an illicit discharge detective:

* Residues, stains, odors, or unusual damage on street surfaces or around stormdrains
* Sediment running off of a construction site (this isn’t natural erosion)
* Fowl smells gathered around outputs (natural algae or oils would be more widespread)
* Water flowing in ditches or stormdrains when it hasn’t rained
* Pipes or hoses directed to stormdrains
* Piles of debris or trash in ditches, ponds, or wetlands
* Catching someone in the act. Kindly educate them by informing them that the drain leads directly to a waterbody. Many times people just aren’t aware.

**Steps for reporting an illicit discharge event:**

1. **Photograph.** Document the substance that’s been dumped into a ditch, pond, or water conveyance system with a photo. (I.e. grass clippings, paint, automotive fluids, construction site run-off, cleaning substances, etc.). If a photo isn’t possible, note the substance or what you expect the substance to be.

2. **Think like a detective**. Document the specific location with a street, cross street, or cardinal directions of the ditch or stormdrain in reference to the street/intersection. Note the day and time as well as any vehicle or license plate information.

3. **Call** the [City/Township] at (###) ###-#### to report the infringement. If you’re not sure if it’s illegal dumping but suspect it, staff will investigate to determine the nature of the problem. Staff will pursue remediation and clean-up as necessary.

4. Celebrate your success! Clean water is everyone’s business and responsibility. Reporting may seem difficult or intimidating, but all reports are made anonymously. Reporting an illicit discharge is responsible thing to do for the community.