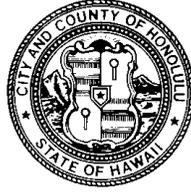


DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

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Storm Water Pollutants

Background Information

The Clean Water Act was established in 1972 with the goal to make US waters clean enough to be swimmable and fishable. To do this, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) established the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program.

Since the City's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4), or drainage system, discharges directly to streams and the ocean, the City is required to obtain an NPDES permit from the State Department of Health. This permit requires the City to reduce the amount of pollutants discharged from the City's MS4 in order to meet the water quality standards of the State of Hawaii to the maximum extent practicable.

The City's MS4 is the system for the conveyance of storm water, and includes roads and streets with drainage systems, catch basins, curbs, gutters, ditches, man-made channels, and storm drains owned by the City.

Components of the City's permit include investigating complaints of pollutant discharges, pursuing enforcement action against dischargers, and requiring licenses for all private storm drain connections to the City's MS4.

What is the law saying?

The City's MS4 was designed to convey storm water, not trash or pollutants. It is illegal to discharge pollutants into the City's MS4 that would cause a violation of any provision for the City NPDES permit or the water quality standards of the State of Hawaii (Hawaii Administrative Rules 11-54). The definition for pollutants, as well as examples of pollutants typically found in the storm drain system, are listed on the back of this sheet under 'Frequently Asked Questions.'



Discharge of any pollutant to a City drainage facility is illegal.

The Ordinance

The Revised Ordinances of Honolulu addresses the potential discharge of pollutants into the City's MS4 in the following sections:

Sec. 14-12.12 Connection to city-owned separate storm sewer system

(a) (1) All connections from nonmunicipal and private drainage systems to the city-owned separate storm sewer system shall require a storm drain connection license issued by the chief engineer.

Sec. 14-22 Discharge of effluent other than storm water runoff

(a) No person shall discharge any effluent other than storm water runoff onto any public right of way and/or into any drainage facility without first obtaining a permit from the chief engineer.

Sec. 14-12.23 Environmental quality control

(a) It shall be unlawful for any person to discharge or cause to be discharged any pollutant into any drainage facility which causes a pollution problem in state waters, or causes a violation of any provision of the city NPDES permit or the water quality standards of the State of Hawaii.



Examples of Pollutants



Sediment is overflowing into the roadway from an exposed dirt stockpile.



Concrete sediment from construction activities is flowing into the roadway.



Dirty washwater from cleaning residential trash bins should not be disposed of in the street. Washwater can instead be disposed on landscaped areas.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is considered a pollutant?

A: As defined under Section 14-12.2 of the Revised Ordinances of Honolulu (ROH), a pollutant is defined as “any waste, cooking or fuel oil, waste milk, waste juice, pesticide, paint, solvent, radioactive waste, hazardous substance, sewage, dredged spoils, chemical waste, rock, sand, biocide, toxic substance, construction waste and material, and soil sediment. The term also includes commercial [fat, oil, and grease, otherwise known as] FOG waste as defined under Section 14-5A.1.”

Q: What kind of pollutants have been found in the storm drain system before?

A: Examples of pollutants typically found in the drain system include paint products, motor oil, pesticides, foam cups and containers, paper products, animal feces, antifreeze, golf balls, dirty diapers, and dead animals.

Q: What’s the difference if some pollutants get into the storm drain? Doesn’t the water get treated anyway?

A: Water in the storm drains does NOT get treated before going into streams and the ocean. Only water that enters the sewer (such as from sinks and toilets) is treated before going to the ocean. In Nanakuli, the City has installed floating booms in the Ulehawa Channel to capture trash and debris. However, such nets have no effect on smaller pollutants, such as bacteria from animal feces, or dissolved pollutants like oil, grease, pesticides, and various metals.



After pollutants are carried to streams and the ocean, they negatively impact aquatic life and water quality. For example, pollutants such as trash, oil, and sediment can block sunlight needed by aquatic plants, and smother coral reefs. Other pollutants which contain bacteria, such as green waste and pet waste, result in excess nutrients as they decompose, causing algae blooms which also block sunlight and use up the oxygen in the water that fish and other organisms need to breathe.

Q: What should I do if I see someone dumping pollutants into a storm drain?

A: Report illegal dumping to the City’s Environmental Concern Line at 768-3300, or go to the City’s website www.cleanwaterhonolulu.com and click on the Contact Us tab on the left to fill out the online form. If it is an emergency and illegal dumping is occurring now, call 911.

Enforcement

The City may issue warnings or fines depending on the severity of the violation, which could range from \$1,000 to \$25,000 per violation per day. State and federal enforcement could add up to \$50,000 per violation per day, and may include criminal prosecution

How can I get more information?

Storm Water Quality Branch.....	768-3242
Environmental Concern Line.....	768-3300

Visit the City’s website at www.cleanwaterhonolulu.com