



## **The Town of Oro Valley Needs Your Help Preventing Illicit Discharges**

### **HELP PROTECT OUR MOST PRECIOUS RESOURCE: WATER**

Storm drains and washes are for transporting rain water runoff. Keeping our stormwater channels clean helps keep our waters clean. Dumping any pollutants into storm drains or washes is an illicit discharge, is illegal, and is a violation of the EPA's Clean Water Act. Additionally, it is illegal to connect any unauthorized pipe, ditch, or other manmade structure to a storm drainage system (an illicit connection). Report illicit discharges, illicit connections, or spills by calling the number at the end of this page. Reporting one of these can help prevent degradation of our precious waters and harm to the environment.

### **WHAT IS AN ILLICIT DISCHARGE?**

An illicit discharge is the introduction of non-stormwater runoff, sewage, pollutants, or hazardous materials into the public stormwater system, such as catch basins, median drop inlets, ditches, or washes. Studies have shown that pollutant discharge from stormwater systems in dry weather due to illicit discharges can exceed the total pollutant flow from storm event flows. Stormwater systems flow untreated to natural water bodies and can directly affect water quality. Storm drains are there to collect stormwater runoff only. The dumping of oil, grease, dirty wash water, or in most cases anything at all into a storm drain is illegal and may cause severe damage to the environment. This includes solid waste, such as trash or yard debris.

### **WHAT ARE EXAMPLES OF AN ILLICIT DISCHARGE?**

Examples of illicit discharges include: pet waste, changing oil or antifreeze over or near a storm structure, washing paint or construction waste down the storm drain, yard waste, leaking trash dumpsters, failing septic systems, overflowing grease traps, operational wash water (residential car washing is allowed), hazardous waste, and chemical spills.

### **WHAT ARE SIGNS OF AN ILLICIT DISCHARGE?**

Signs of an illicit discharge can include: staining, residues, oily substances, odors, dry weather flows, turbid (cloudy) waters, or suds. Dry Weather Flow is observed when it has not rained for at least 72 hours and the storm drain has flow or the drain shows signs of intermittent flow (staining, odor). Oil/Gas is recognized as sheen on the water. Natural sheens may be differentiated from an oil/gas sheen by swirling the sheen around in the water. If it re-attaches to itself, the sheen is oil/gas. Natural sheens will remain separated. Oil or gas enters water bodies via storm water runoff (spills while topping off at gas stations, oil leaks on pavement, etc.) and illegal dumping. Sanitary Sewage may be present if there is black staining inside the drainage pipe; visible evidence of sanitary waste, such as toilet paper; or opaque or gray water. Sewage may originate from septic tank overflow pipes or improperly dumped travel trailer waste.

**If you see any of the activities referenced in this handout please inform the Town of Oro Valley Stormwater Utility by calling 520-229-4816**