

Reporting Polluting Discharges

Tips for Highway Departments in Schuyler County

In the process of monitoring and maintaining roads and associated drainage systems, you may observe polluting discharges. Should this be reported? To whom?

Why should you care?

Studies indicate that a significant proportion of pollutants in urban and suburban waters are the result of deliberate or inadvertent discharges. This means that they are inappropriate releases of sewage, toxic materials, or other pollutants that can – and should – be corrected or prevented. The US Environmental Protection Agency calls these “illicit discharges.”



What should you look for?

- Dry weather flows – Ditches and outfalls that flow in dry weather may indicate broken sewer pipes, cross connections, and/or illegal dumping (though natural springs are also a common cause).
- Foul smells – Your nose is a sensitive detector for locating failing septic systems and other contaminants.
- Unusual colors – Water with an oil sheen, foam, solid matter, or discoloration is likely to be carrying pollutants.
- Spills – Accidental spills (or deliberate dumping) can result in toxic materials washing into streams and waterways.
- Trash – Floating trash and debris can be caused by littering or by inappropriate storage near drainageways.
- Find the source (if possible)

Who should you contact?

- Emergency – If there is an emergency situation resulting from the accidental release of unknown or potentially hazardous materials, call **911**.
- Spill Hotline – Report spills or leaks of petroleum products or hazardous materials to the NYS Spill Hotline. All petroleum spills must be reported within 2 hours of discovery. **1-800-457-7362**
- Watershed Protection Agency – Sewage releases should be reported to the Schuyler County Watershed Protection Agency. **535-6868**
- Environmental Conservation Police Officer – Report pollution discharges to the NYSDEC Turn in Poachers and Polluters hotline. **1-800-TIPP-DEC (1-800-847-7332)**
- Code Enforcement Officer – Improper disposal of rubbish and garbage violates the Property Maintenance Code and should be reported to the municipal Code Enforcement Officer. Some municipalities also have litter ordinances.
- Soil and Water Conservation District – The Soil and Water Conservation District assists with drainage, erosion, and sediment issues. **535-6878**

HELP KEEP OUR WATERS SAFE AND CLEAN