



LOS ANGELES COUNTY ♦ DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH  
Bureau of Environmental Protection  
Recreational Waters Program  
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**SEWAGE DISCHARGE REPORTING GUIDELINES**  
**(November 1, 2009)**

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Division (the Department) is responsible for monitoring ocean water quality. The Department is charged with taking appropriate action when untreated sewage enters a drainage channel that discharges into a coastal region where public health may be jeopardized. If beaches become contaminated due to untreated sewage and pose a threat to public health, the beach may be closed. The Department is required to immediately issue instructions to post "Beach Closure" signs as well as to send out public advisory information through the wire services explaining the reason for each beach closure. Effective monitoring of ocean water quality however, requires open communication and a clear understanding of the Department's policies of reporting sewage spills from the cities within Los Angeles County, as well as the Sanitation Districts, Departments of Internal Services, Public Works, and the sewage treatment facilities. If we all work together, we can protect the public beaches and the ocean water quality in Los Angeles County.

It is the policy of the Department that a discharge or by-pass of sewage from the public sewerage system shall be reported to the Recreational Waters Program (the Program) immediately. Upon notification, the Program will determine the mandated action to be taken.

**DEFINITIONS:**

**Immediate Response** means 15 minutes from the time an agency confirms that a sanitary sewer overflow has occurred or is occurring from the agency's sewer collection system.

**Reportable Sewage Discharge** means any sewage that is discharged (break / blockage in any line, clean out cap removed, etc.) from a sewerage system outside of a building onto the ground surface which has passed the curb and entered the street gutter flowing toward or entering the storm water systems. This applies to commercial as well as residential buildings.

**Waters of the State** means any water on the ground surface which has passed the curb and entered the street gutter flowing toward or entering the storm water system.

**PROCEDURE:**

**If discharging sewage is found to be flowing from a property, into the street, is moving toward or is already entering a storm drain (Waters of the State), the County Operator shall be notified immediately at (213) 974 – 1234.**

- All notifications of sewage spills shall be assigned an Incident Number when called into the County Operator;
- The person reporting the sewage discharge is required to provide the following minimal information:
  1. Contact information;
  2. Location of the discharge;
  3. Amount of the discharge;
  4. Start time and end time of the discharge; and
  5. Disposition of the discharge (contained, went into a storm drain / waterway, soaked into ground, etc.).
- Additional information shall be provided upon containment of discharge.

**AUTHORITY:** California Health and Safety Code, Section 5411.5