

Residential Conservation

Consider these easy ways

YOU can help to protect our local waters:

✓ **Dispose of Waste Properly**

Improper disposal of oil-based paints, mineral spirits, pool chemicals, pesticides, or other home chemicals can pollute our sensitive Sanibel environment. Did you know that used automobile batteries and fluids can be returned to an auto parts shop? Other household waste items can be dropped off at:

LEE COUNTY HOUSEHOLD CHEMICAL WASTE FACILITY

6441 Topaz Court
Fort Myers, FL 33966
(239) 533-8000

For more information about hazardous waste disposal please call the Sanibel Public Works Department at (239) 472-6397 or visit <http://www.mysanibel.com> and click on Public Works Department.

✓ **Protect Your Storm Drain**

Water in storm drains does not go to the water treatment plant! Pollutants entering storm drains end up in our canals and coastal waters. Maintain a "fertilizer-free" zone around all storm drains and be sure that pet waste and yard clippings near storm drains are picked up and disposed of properly.

For additional information regarding National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), visit Lee County Department of Natural Resources at <http://www.leegov.com>

Stormwater Pollution

Stormwater runoff is one of the greatest threats to water quality in Florida.



Stormwater runoff is rain that does not soak into the ground where it falls. This water runs off yards, streets and parking lots into storm sewers or waterways and carries a variety of pollutants including:

- Illicit discharges
- Fertilizers
- Yard waste
- Paint
- Gasoline/Motor oil
- Pesticides/Weed Killers
- Pet Wastes
- Detergents and Soaps
- Other pollution/hazardous wastes

To Report an Illicit Discharge

Call the
City of Sanibel
Police Department
(239) 472-3111

Actions we take in our homes and yards can affect our water and wildlife resources. Storm drains along Sanibel's neighborhood streets drain into roadway swales, canals and wetlands and end up in our estuaries, bay and Gulf waters. This is the same water we drink and enjoy recreationally. As individuals, and collectively, we CAN protect Sanibel's fragile estuaries and wildlife, and continue to enjoy our sanctuary island!

If you have any questions about a possible illicit discharge, please call the City of Sanibel Public Works Department (239) 472-6397 or visit <http://www.mysanibel.com> and click on Public Works Department.

Identifying and Reporting

Illicit Discharge



A Homeowners Guide to:

- Recognizing Illicit Discharges
- Sanitary Sewage Pollution
- Stormwater Pollution
- Residential Conservation
- Reporting Illicit Discharges



What is Illicit Discharge?

An Illicit Discharge is ANY disposal, emptying or dumping of any substance other than rainfall into the stormwater drainage system. Pollutants entering Sanibel's stormwater system do not flow to the water treatment plant, they empty into our local canals, wetlands, fragile estuaries, bays and Gulf waters! Chemicals and nutrients become stormwater pollution as they are soaked up by the passing water. The stormwater pollution is harmful and can lead to algae blooms, resulting in hypoxia and other impacts to fish and wildlife.

Water quality is important to improve and sustain the wonderful waters of Sanibel for future generations to enjoy. Keeping this ecosystem and fishery healthy is critical to protecting the quality of life of the Island's residents and wildlife, as well as our local economy.



Photo Credits: EPA Website

Sanitary Sewer System

Until the early 1990s, domestic wastewater treatment on Sanibel consisted largely of septic systems and 18 small package plants. A privately owned centralized wastewater facility served individual developments.

Septic system effluent discharges to the groundwater or surrounding surface water and impacts water quality. Nitrogen passing through the drainfield converts to nitrate and eventually leaches to groundwater and nearby surface water. Other contaminants include bacteria and Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs).

In August 1991, the City acquired the Island's centralized wastewater facility. The citizens of Sanibel have invested over \$64 million to improve and expand the City's centralized sanitary sewer system. Since the purchase, the City has integrated all eighteen small package plants, dozens of commercial and over 3,000 residential septic systems.

Benefits of the central sewer systems include removing contaminants that could reach the groundwater and nearby surface water from septic systems. Reclaimed water from the central sewer system is used for irrigation of island golf courses and residential customers.

When non-sewer objects such as diapers, clothing and other non-degradable objects are improperly disposed of in the sewer system, blockages and damage to pumps can cause backups and overflow that can flood homes and surrounding environment. This type of cleanup can be very costly. Please properly dispose of waste.

Disposing Cooking Waste

Cooking oil and grease are wastes that the sewer system cannot handle and should not be discarded down the sink. Dumping grease, fats and oil can clog sewer lines causing sewage back-ups and flooding. Sewage back-ups can damage personal property, public property and also the surrounding environment.

DO NOT dump cooking oil, poultry fat and grease into the kitchen sink or the toilet bowl.

DO NOT use hot water and soap to wash grease down the sink because it will cool and harden in your pipes or in the sewer down the line.



DO place cooled cooking oil, poultry and meat fats in sealed non-recyclable containers and discard with your regular garbage.

DO use paper towels to wipe residual grease or oil off of dishes, pots and pans prior to washing them.

Disposing Pharmaceuticals

Flushing medications down the toilet or throwing them into your trash can also be harmful to our environment. These pharmaceuticals can end up in our water system.



Islanders have two options for properly disposing of expired prescriptions, over-the-counter medications, needles and "sharps."

- **Island Pharmacy** accepts pharmaceuticals and "sharps" for proper disposal daily.

Island Pharmacy,
2330 Palm Ridge Road, #12
Sanibel, FL 33957
(239) 472-6188,

- **Lee County Sheriff's Office** has a prescription drug drop-off box open Monday - Friday, 7:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Syringes cannot be disposed here.
14750 Ben C. Pratt Six-Mile Cypress Pkwy.
Fort Myers, FL 33912
(239) 477-1000