

What should I do if I observe an SSO?

Immediate notification and appropriate response are essential factors at minimizing the impact from SSOs.



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Regulated entities are required to submit Public Notices of Pollution for reportable releases. The preferred method for reporting is using the link below:

<http://prodenv.dep.state.fl.us/DepPNP/user/pnpRequest>

Reporting entities may also report via e-mail using the Pollution Notice Form and e-mailing it to:

pollution.notice@dep.state.fl.us.

DEP is making available to the public all Notices received to date as well as offering an e-mail subscription service for interested parties to be informed of Notices submitted for their area of interest.

In addition, wastewater utilities and owners of satellite collection systems are required to report spills which are of 1,000 gallons or greater, or which may threaten the environment or public health to DEP through a **toll-free, 24-hour hotline** known as the State Watch Office.

State Watch Office
1-800-320-0519

The public is encouraged to report SSOs to the State Watch Office, to their local DEP Emergency Response Office or local Delegated Program.

Other Useful Resources

- Clean Water State Revolving Fund

<https://floridadep.gov/wra/srf/content/cwsrf-program>

- Public Notice of Pollution

Subscribe at the link below to receive Public Notices of Pollution, view submitted notices or obtain blank copy of the Pollution Notice Form

<https://floridadep.gov/pollutionnotice>

- DEP District Contact Information

<https://floridadep.gov/water/water-compliance-assurance/content/district-and-delegated-local-program-contacts>

- DEP Wastewater Incident Reporting

<https://floridadep.gov/water/water-compliance-assurance/content/emergency-response>

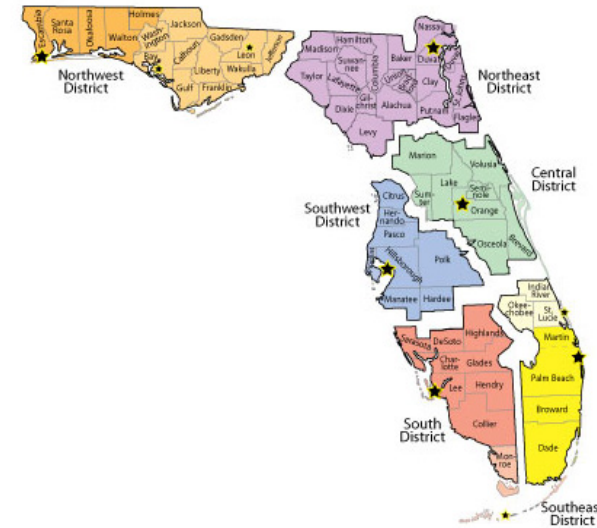


Blue Springs State Park

<https://floridadep.gov/springs/visit>

DEP Emergency Response Phone Numbers

Central District – Orlando	407-897-4100
Northeast District - Jacksonville	904-256-1700
Northwest District – Pensacola	850-595-8300
❖ Panama City Branch Office	850-872-4375
❖ Tallahassee Branch Office	850-872-2010
South District - Ft Myers	293-344-5600
❖ Marathon Branch Office	305-289-7071
Southeast District - W Palm Beach	561-681-6767
Southwest District - Temple Terrace	813-470-5954



Delegated Programs

Sarasota County	941-861-5000
Palm Beach County	561-837-5900
Broward County	954-519-1256
Miami-Dade County	305-372-6714
Hillsborough County	813-627-2600

Sanitary Sewer Overflows



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Florida Department of Environmental Protection
www.floridadep.gov

What are Sanitary Sewer Overflows?

A sanitary sewer overflow (SSO) is any overflow, spill, release, discharge or diversion of untreated or partially treated wastewater from a sanitary sewer system. A sanitary sewer overflow can spill domestic wastewater out of manholes and onto streets and into storm water systems, surface water bodies or into toilets, sinks and drains before it can reach a treatment facility.



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Why are SSOs a problem?

SSOs entering rivers, lakes or streams may affect water quality and public health. The overall impact of wastewater discharges to surface waters is fortunately temporary. Our bays, rivers and gulf are constantly moving, which results in the dissipation and dilution of wastewater contaminants in a few days.

The Florida Department of Health issues health advisories when bacteria levels present a risk to human health and may also post warning signs when bacteria affect public beaches or other areas where there is the risk of human exposure.

Because SSOs contain partially treated (or potentially untreated) domestic wastewater, ingestion or similar contact may cause illness. People can be exposed through:

- Direct contact in areas of high public access
- Food which has been contaminated
- Inhalation and skin absorption

What are the causes of SSOs?

Although wastewater facilities are permitted and designed to safely and properly collect and manage a specified wastewater capacity, obstructions or extreme conditions can cause SSOs.

When the flow of wastewater is obstructed in the pipe, the wastewater may then back up and overflow through a manhole, cleanout, toilet, sink or drain. This overflowing wastewater may then make its way into the environment, a house or a business. Contributing factors may include:

- Too much rainfall infiltrating through the ground into leaky sanitary sewers, which are not intended to hold rainfall. Excess water can also flow through roof drains connected to sewers or poorly connected sewer lines.



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- Broken or cracked pipes and other equipment or power failures that keep the system from properly functioning.
- Tree roots growing into the sewer causing an obstruction or shifting/breaking pipes.
- A deteriorating or aging sewer system.
- Buildup of Fats, Oil and Grease (FOG)

How Can SSOs Be Reduced?

Wastewater facilities and satellite collection system owners can reduce SSOs by:

- Providing maintenance and cleaning the sewer system.
- Implementing a FOG control program by educating residential and commercial customers of the importance of not pouring fats, oil and grease down the drain.



Courtesy photo, U.S. Department of Defense, Public Domain

- Reducing infiltration and inflow through system rehabilitation and repairing broken or leaking lines.
- Enlarging or upgrading sewer, pump station or sewage treatment plant capacity and/or reliability.
- Construction of wet weather storage and treatment facilities to treat excess flows.

Permit holders do have bypass provisions when human health and safety are at risk and there is no feasible alternative. The utilities are required to notify the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) within 24 hours if they need to use those provisions.

Frequent sewage overflows at a system could indicate that the system needs repairs, upgrades or expanded capacity. Expanding capacity, upgrading facilities and repairing or replacing aging or broken sewage infrastructure can help prevent sewage overflows.

DEP, through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund, provides low-interest loans to local governments to plan, design and build or upgrade and expand wastewater facilities.

At home, you can help reduce SSOs by:

- Collecting fats, oil and grease in a container and dispose of it in the trash, not down the drain.
- Scrape grease and food scraps from dishes into the trash can.
- Use sink and shower drain strainers.
- Minimize use of kitchen sink garbage disposal units when it is raining. As the units require lots of water to operate properly, and also add to the volume of solids in a septic tank or sewage system. To avoid maintenance problems and overflows, compost food scraps or throw them in the trash.
- Avoid doing laundry or using the dishwasher during heavy rain storms to minimize water entering the sewer system.
- Route rain gutter downspouts onto your lawn or into the stormwater system.
- Make sure your home's sewer cleanout cap is intact.
- Avoid planting trees and shrubs close to sewer lines as tree roots can intrude into a sewer line and cause cracks and clogs.
- If you experience flooding, never remove sewer manhole covers or your home's sewer cleanout cap to drain the flood water into the sewer system.
- Do not flush or pour down the drain:
 - ❖ Medications or Vitamins
 - ❖ Pesticides
 - ❖ Personal Care Products
 - ❖ Herbicides
 - ❖ Fats, Oil (cooking oil) and Grease
 - ❖ Diapers