

Illicit Discharges & Dumping Workgroup
Thursday, January 15, 2009
2:45 PM to 3:45 PM

Individuals Present:

Linda Broach (TCEQ), Steve Hupp (HCPHES-EPH), James Walls (Harris County), Denise Hall (HCPHES-EPH), Robert Snoza (HCFCD), Karen Kottke (AECOM), Mary Purzer (AECOM), Philip Moore (Montgomery County Environmental Health)

H-GAC Staff Present:

Rachel Powers

Discussion:

Rachel began the discussion by asking that everyone review the table and the group work towards filling in any gaps and providing clarifications for any ideas misrepresented in the table.

A suggestion was made to group unpermitted/permitted facilities' stormwater runoff, improperly stored nutrients, and turf farms/nurseries as sub-categories under a source titled stormwater runoff. Additionally golf courses should be included with turf farms/nurseries. The problem with these is excess nutrient runoff. These places are not currently covered by the general permit and therefore do not get inspected regularly. It was suggested that the general permit should cover these types of facilities. It was also suggested that the group should determine the current level of permitting, for these facilities, and if they need to be improved.

For leaking dumpsters as a source it was suggested that rules requiring dumpsters to have lids and a plug to seal the drain hole at the bottom already exist, but that maybe they are not being enforced enough. The implementation activity should be to increase enforcement of existing rules. It should be verified that the rules are broad enough and the penalty is appropriate and effective.

The discussion then focused on power washing. Questions were raised as to whether or not regulations existed regarding their use and whether or not power washing is a source of bacteria. The City of Houston has ordinances regarding power washing. It could likely be regulated by state law, but there is no state law specific to power washing. Harris County can enforce power washing through the regulation that prohibits putting contaminants into waters of the state. Even such things as temperature change and sediment can be considered contaminants. It was suggested that the implementation activity be to require capture and treatment of wash water.

Question: What does monitor of trip tickets refer to? Grease haulers, septic trucks, manure and sludge haulers.

Clarification: sanitary line plumbed directly into the storm sewer would be covered under direct discharge of toilets.

Source Priorities:

- Direct discharges
- Hauling and dumping of waste, but catching them improperly disposing of waste is a manpower intensive operation.
- Grease traps (anything not being covered by the Sanitary Sewer System Workgroup)

For the Research group:

- Does cosmetic washing contribute bacteria?

Next meeting:

Thursday, April 2, 2009, 1:30 PM to 2:30 PM, H-GAC offices, Conference Room B