

	Manual: Environmental Health Services
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Prepared By:	Original Policy Date: 02-11-85
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TITLE: Sewage Investigations	

AUTHORITY:

Health and Safety Code Sections 5410, 5411 and 5412, Uniform Housing Code, Section 101 b. 16

POLICY:

As stated in Health and Safety Code Section 5411, no person shall discharge sewage or other waste, or the effluent of treated sewage or other waste, in any manner which will result in contamination, pollution or a nuisance.

PROCEDURES:

The following procedures are to be followed in response to receiving a complaint of an above ground sewage discharge.

1. Upon notification of the sewage complaint, at the earliest possible time that day, EHS will validate the complaint by (a) contacting the RP by telephone or (b) going on site.
2. After validating the complaint, EHS will contact the occupant of the property in order to gain entrance. The EHS and the occupant will then proceed to the actual location of the sewage discharge.
3. If the source of the discharge cannot be directly identified, the EHS will attempt to determine the source by flushing tracer dye down the toilet of the suspected residence and/or placing the dye in the washing machine drain. (NOTE: Do not put the dye directly into the washing machine but only into the drain).
4. If the dye does not surface in a reasonable amount of time, approx. 30 minutes, it may be necessary to return the following day to see if any evidence of the dye can be seen. If no dye surfaces within 48 hours, no further action is necessary unless another source might be responsible. It will then be necessary to investigate the additional possible sources using the above described procedure.
5. Photographs and a sample of the effluent and dye are to be taken for evidence.

6. If access cannot be gained, it may be necessary to obtain an inspection warrant through the District Attorney's Office (see your supervisor).
7. When the effluent source has been identified and the evidence described above has been gathered, the EHS will issue a Notice of Violation to the owner of the property giving the individual an appropriate amount of time to make repairs. Typically 30 days are given to make necessary repairs however this amount of time may be modified depending on the circumstances. However, in no case will the illicit discharge of sewage be allowed to continue.
8. If a public sewer system is available within 200 feet of the residence, EHS must require that the owner connect to the sewer.
9. A follow-up inspection will be made by EHS on the date indicated in the Notice of Violation to confirm compliance with the Notice.
10. If compliance has not been achieved by the date specified in the first Notice of Violation, EHS will issue a second Notice of Violation giving a reduced amount of time for compliance.
11. If the second Notice of Violation does not bring satisfactory compliance, EHS will consult with their Supervisor to initiate Administrative Fines as allowed by Ch 24 of the County Code. Additional compliance measures may include referral to the District Attorney's office and or the Building Official to have the dwelling declared Substandard Housing.
12. When cleaning up sewage overflows attention must be given to not creating an additional or larger problem than the original. Proper cleanup would include removal of solids and sanitizing.