



## Silver Spring Township MS4

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is an MS4?**

MS4 stands for Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System. This system is owned and operated by a public body, in our case the Township, and includes inlets, basins, man-made channels, storm drains and various other stormwater conveyance systems.

### **Where did the program come from?**

The Clean Water Act (CWA), enacted in 1972, established the basic structure for regulating discharges of pollutants into the nation's waters. By the late 1990s the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) began focusing on eliminating nonpoint source pollution, which comes from a variety of scattered sources, creating the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit program. The CWA was the driving force behind MS4 permit requirements.

### **Why do we regulate stormwater?**

Stormwater runoff is generated by rain or snow that flows over the land and impervious surfaces such as roads, buildings, and parking lots, preventing it from soaking in the ground. The runoff typically picks up pollutants like trash, oils, and dirt that harm our waterways. In order to protect these resources Silver Spring Township, under the MS4 program, implements federally mandated stormwater controls to mitigate and prevent pollution.

### **What is Silver Spring's MS4 required to do?**

When polluted stormwater runoff enters an MS4 it will be discharged into local rivers and streams without treatment. The EPA's NPDES permit program outlines the regulatory requirements for an MS4 program. The requirements include six Minimum Control Measures (MCMs). Additionally, since Silver Spring Township is within the Chesapeake Bay watershed, the Township must also implement a Chesapeake Bay Pollution Reduction Plan (CBPRP). Our CBPRP is a DEP mandate to meet the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirements. The TMDL reduction requirements are to reduce pollution caused by sediment by 10%, Phosphorus by 5%, and Nitrogen by 3%. Our plan includes a series of best management practices (BMPs) to help reduce the pollutants.

## What are MCMs and BMPs?

There is a series of six Minimum Control Measures (MCMs) that the Township is mandated to follow, each containing their own set of Best Management Practices (BMPs). MCMs are guidelines for improving the quality of water and BMPs are a type of water pollution control. BMPs can be structural or principal. The six MCMs are listed below with examples of their BMPs.

1. **Public Education and Outreach on Stormwater Impacts:** Distribute educational materials in the form of a newsletter, flyer, or a website that includes general stormwater educational information.
2. **Public Involvement and Participation:** Provide opportunities for residents to participate and provide input in the form of public meetings or other events.
3. **Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination:** Develop and implement a plan for the detection, elimination, and prevention of illicit discharges to the storm sewer system.
4. **Construction Site Stormwater Runoff Control:** Develop, implement and enforce an erosion and sediment control program for construction activities that disturb one or more acres of land. Silver Spring Township's erosion and sediment control program is conducted by the Cumberland County Conservation District.
5. **Post-Construction Stormwater Management (PCSM) in New Development and Redevelopment:** Develop, implement and enforce a program to address discharges or post-construction stormwater runoff from new development and redevelopment areas. Applicable controls could be the use of structural BMPs such as vegetated swales and detention basins.
6. **Pollution Prevention and Good Housekeeping:** Develop and implement an operations and maintenance (O&M) program that includes training components and plans to reduce polluted runoff from municipal operations.

## What is an illicit discharge and how do I report one?

The EPA defines illicit discharges as “any discharge to the storm sewer system that is not composed entirely of stormwater.” Illicit discharges can be from car wash waste water, spills from roadway accidents, failed septic systems, and improper disposal of household toxins and detergents. These substances can either enter our waterways through direct connections or indirect connections.

It is always good to monitor the stormwater inlets near your property. If you see someone dumping, please call the Silver Spring Township Office at 717-766-0178 or the PA DEP 24 hour hotline at 1-800-541-2050.