



**Citizen Concerns/Violations  
Operations & Procedures  
March 13, 2014**

The intent of these procedures is to provide a process of reporting an incident/complaint, and investigating and enforcing violations, or to provide for a more educational approach by also providing information and guidance.

The incidents/complaints filed will be forwarded to the appropriate office on a City form. Only calls related to property within the incorporated areas of The City of Chickamauga will be addressed by City staff. All others will be forwarded to the appropriate agency. The types of incidents/ complaints can include illicit discharges, illegal dumping, erosion control, construction site runoff, stormwater issues, flooding problems, etc. The City will take all calls regarding any type of complaint and forward it to the appropriate department to respond.

— The City has several methods of filing a complaint. These options include: filing a written complaint to the Chickamauga City Hall any time via regular mail, fax, or email. The mailing address is P.O. Box 69, Chickamauga, GA 30707. The fax number is 706-375-3958; attn: Stormwater Management Program. If sending a message via email, please email the Stormwater Program Manager at [jpowell-zoning@comcast.net](mailto:jpowell-zoning@comcast.net). A citizen may also file an incident/complaint by calling the City Hall at 706-375-3177 or visiting the City Hall during regular business hours. The City's website also provides guidance on how to file an incident report or concern.

Citizens should report the problem as soon as it is identified. Many of the reporting options do allow for anonymous reporting so reports can be done without fear of retribution from neighbors, employers, or others. This will be achieved by providing an "Incident ID" that may also be used to allow the caller to track the investigation and know that their concerns are being addressed, as well as accountability within the department to respond to callers. The level of detail collected during an incident report will vary depending on system design and complaint responder training. More detailed information will help prioritize investigations and take advantage of a database system to expand reporting options. A sample Illicit Discharge Incident Tracking Sheet is included to help facilitate this process. The sheet is intended for use with a phone reporting system, and is designed so that the responder can prompt the caller through each section. This sheet may be modified into a simple, multiple-choice questionnaire if reporting is done through a website or email. The basic information collected during an incident report is described below.

- *Incident ID* - Each incident should receive a unique identification code to ensure accurate tracking and public feedback.

- *Reporter Information* - Reporter contact information may be recorded, however, anonymous reporting is often preferred because it frees the reporter from potential backlash. The date and time of incident must be noted, as it may be different than the time it was called in.
- *Responder Information* - The name of the responder and the time and date of the call should be recorded. The amount of precipitation in the past 24-48 hours is also recorded for reporting purposes.
- *Incident Location* - The location of the potential illicit discharge is one of the most important yet difficult pieces of information to accurately collect. Unique and visible outfall numbering allows reports to be precisely located. In the absence of outfall IDs, callers should be encouraged to provide the nearest street/intersection information and any general descriptions that tie the site to a nearby landmark or major land use (e.g., shopping center, school, etc.), as well as indicate whether the incident site is located in the stream corridor or in an upland area. Other options are to include blank space for narrative descriptions or for the response team to meet the caller at a nearby known location if the caller cannot provide sufficient location information.
- *Problem Type* - Providing a list of likely problems and problem descriptions can help to readily identify the potential source. The problem types will likely fall into the following five categories: unnatural stream conditions, sewage, wash water, oil/solvents, and industrial wastes. "Other" should also be included, as exceptions will occur. By identifying a suspected origin, the field team may have a head start on the investigation and suspected repeat offenders can be screened through trend analysis.
- *Problem Indicator Description* – A description of the discharge odor and color, and type of floatables present permits investigators to know what they are looking for and start preparing for how to handle the situation.
- *Investigation Notes* - To properly track and report suspected illicit discharges, the investigation needs to be documented. Key information to record for the initial and follow-up investigation (if applicable) include: date, time, step taken to respond to incident report (not all require follow up), investigators, length of time spent for investigation, corrective actions taken, date case closed, and any other pertinent information.

Due to the intermittent nature of illicit discharges, a 24-hour investigation response can increase the likelihood of identifying and eliminating problems. While some problems require more immediate attention than others, investigators should always respond as soon as possible. The answers to the complaint questions should be detailed enough to help support this basic prioritization. 24-hour response is not always possible by the stormwater program. In the event of an emergency situation, the citizen should call 9-1-1. Non-emergency response will only occur during normal working hours (e.g., 8AM - 5PM).

## **Personnel Training**

Training of complaint respondents will include how to provide good customer service, the basics of illicit discharge identification and details of the tracking and reporting process. The responder will be trained so that he/she understands the significance of the information being collected and can go beyond the "check boxes" when necessary to answer the reporter questions, as well as guide the caller through the data collection process. This will help ensure that the incident is handled correctly, and that the caller feels that the concern is in good hands. An initial screening of the potential illicit source by the responder can be useful. We have included a list of descriptions of common illicit discharges called in and the likely source or situation.

### **Typical Call-in Indicators Likely Source**

- Sewage smell, or floatables from storm drain outfall during dry weather flow
- Storm and sanitary sewer cross-connection
- Small (<6" diameter) pipe directly discharging to receiving water
- Straight pipe discharge from home or business
- Greatly discolored or unnatural smelling liquid (often hydrocarbons) flowing from or pooling on property or from outfall below property
- Dumping
- Sewage smell; extra green vegetation; saturated ground
- Failing septic system
- Muddy water; sediment deposits, up-stream construction site
- Poor erosion and sediment control

Inter- and intra-department training will focus on the importance of IDDE, the complaint investigation and tracking process, and the expected responsibilities of each involved entity. We understand that such training will greatly increase watershed wide awareness of illicit discharge problems and is essential to developing good working relationships with other departments.

### **Citizen Concerns/Violations**

The intent of these procedures is to provide a process of reporting an incident/complaint, and investigating and enforcing violations, or to provide for a more educational approach by also providing information and guidance.

The incidents/complaints filed will be forwarded to the appropriate office on a City form. Only calls related to property within the incorporated areas of The City of Chickamauga will be addressed by City staff. All others will be forwarded to the appropriate agency. The types of incidents/ complaints can include illicit discharges, illegal dumping, erosion control, construction site runoff, stormwater issues, flooding problems, etc. The City will take all calls regarding any type of complaint and forward it to the appropriate department to respond.

- The City has several methods of filing a complaint. These options include: filing a written complaint to the City Hall any time via regular mail, fax, or email. The mailing address is P.O. Box 69, Chickamauga, GA 30707. The fax number is 706-375-3958; attn: Stormwater Management Program. If sending a message via email, please email the Stormwater Program Manager at [jpowell-zoning@comcast.net](mailto:jpowell-zoning@comcast.net). A citizen may also file an incident/complaint by calling the City Hall at 706-375-3177 or visiting the City Hall during regular business hours. The City's website also provides guidance on how to file an incident report or concern.

The form used for this type of citizen concern or complaint follows:

## Construction Site Runoff Citizen Complaint Tracking Sheet

<b>Incident ID:</b>			
<b>Responder Information</b>			
Call taken by:		Call date:	
Call time:		Precipitation (inches) in past 24-48 hrs:	
<b>Reporter Information</b>			
Incident time:		Incident date:	
Caller contact information (optional):			
<b>Incident Location</b> (complete one or more below)			
Latitude and longitude:			
Stream address or outfall #:			
Closest street address:			
Nearby landmark:			
<b>Primary Location Description</b>		<b>Secondary Location Description:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Stream corridor (In or adjacent to stream)	<input type="checkbox"/> Outfall	<input type="checkbox"/> In-stream flow	<input type="checkbox"/> Along banks
<input type="checkbox"/> Upland area (Land not adjacent to stream)	<input type="checkbox"/> Near storm drain	<input type="checkbox"/> Near other water source (storm water pond, wetland, etc.):	
Narrative description of location:			
<b>Upland Problem Indicator Description</b>			
<input type="checkbox"/> Dumping	<input type="checkbox"/> Erosion & Sedimentation	<input type="checkbox"/> Sewage	
<input type="checkbox"/> Washout water, suds, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____		
Narrative description of problem:			
Suspected Violator (name, personal or vehicle description, license plate #, etc.):			