

What we do as an MS4

So, what is a municipal separate storm sewer system MS4?

A MS4 is a conveyance or system of conveyances (roads with drainage systems, municipal streets, catch basins, curbs, gutters, ditches, man-made channels, storm drains, etc.) that is not a combined sewer; and which is not part of a publicly owned treatment works.

The City of Thornton's Stormwater Management Program describes the procedures and processes for reducing or eliminating pollution discharges into the city's MS4.

The city's primary goal is to manage its stormwater program to effectively reduce or prevent stormwater pollutants in accordance with pollutant restrictions, prohibitions, and reduction requirements consistent with the terms and conditions of the permit within the city's boundary and its conveyance system.

There are six important components of the MS4 General Permit that define the minimum requirements for a successful program:

1. Public Education and Outreach: The goal is to build greater support for the stormwater management program, increase compliance, and ultimately increase environmental awareness amongst members of the community.
2. Public Involvement/Participation: The objectives of the public involvement program include providing opportunities for the public to participate in program development and implementation and to assure compliance with applicable state and local public notice requirements.
3. Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination: The city has developed a plan to detect and eliminate illicit discharges to the storm sewer system (like chemical dumping and wastewater connections). The plan is to educate the public on what an illicit discharge is, "any discharge to the MS4 that is not composed entirely of stormwater". Although, there are some exception (residential car washing, sump pump discharges, agricultural stormwater runoff, etc.). Any discharge deemed a threat to public safety or public health is automatically in violation of the city code and is thus subject to a removal order and/or fines.
4. Construction Site: The city has developed a program to reduce or prevent discharges of pollutants to the MS4 from construction activities in the city. The program requires all construction activities must have control measures to prevent sediment and other pollutions discharges. The city inspects all construction site on a routine basis enforcing city code for non-compliant sites.
5. Post-Construction Stormwater Management in New Development and Redevelopment: This program measure emphasizes the reduction or elimination of pollutants to the municipal separate storm sewer system that may come from post-construction runoff after new development and redevelopment projects. The

term post-construction is used to describe runoff from a site with impermeable surfaces, such as buildings, roads, and parking lots that remain after construction ends. The city provides design standards and inspections during and after construction to ensure appropriate control measures are installed and maintained in compliance with the MS4 permit and design standards.

6. Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping for Municipal Operations: This program is to ensure the city's municipal facilities and operations are managed in ways to minimize pollutant discharges to the MS4. Facilities include municipally owned or operated building, parks, public works facilities, and infrastructure. Operations and maintenance activities include street maintenance, storage facilities, fleet maintenance, stormwater system maintenance, solid waste management, parks including pesticide and fertilizer applications. This program includes staff training and routine facility inspections.