



## Frequently

## Asked

## Questions

# W A T E R B U R E A U

### **Q: What regulatory program regulates the wastewater discharge from my facility?**

The regulations that apply to wastewater discharges are dependent upon wastewater destination. There are three common destinations for wastewater:

- Direct discharge to surface waters of the state.
- Direct discharge to land that enters groundwater of the state.
- Indirect discharge of wastewater to waters of the state via a Publicly Owned Treatment Works (POTW) (wastewater treatment plant).

A direct discharge means that the wastewater goes into waters of the state (groundwater, streams, lakes, rivers, etc.) without treatment from a POTW. This includes through a storm sewer system that enters waters of the state (See Separate Sewer System picture on next page), a ditch or other conveyance.

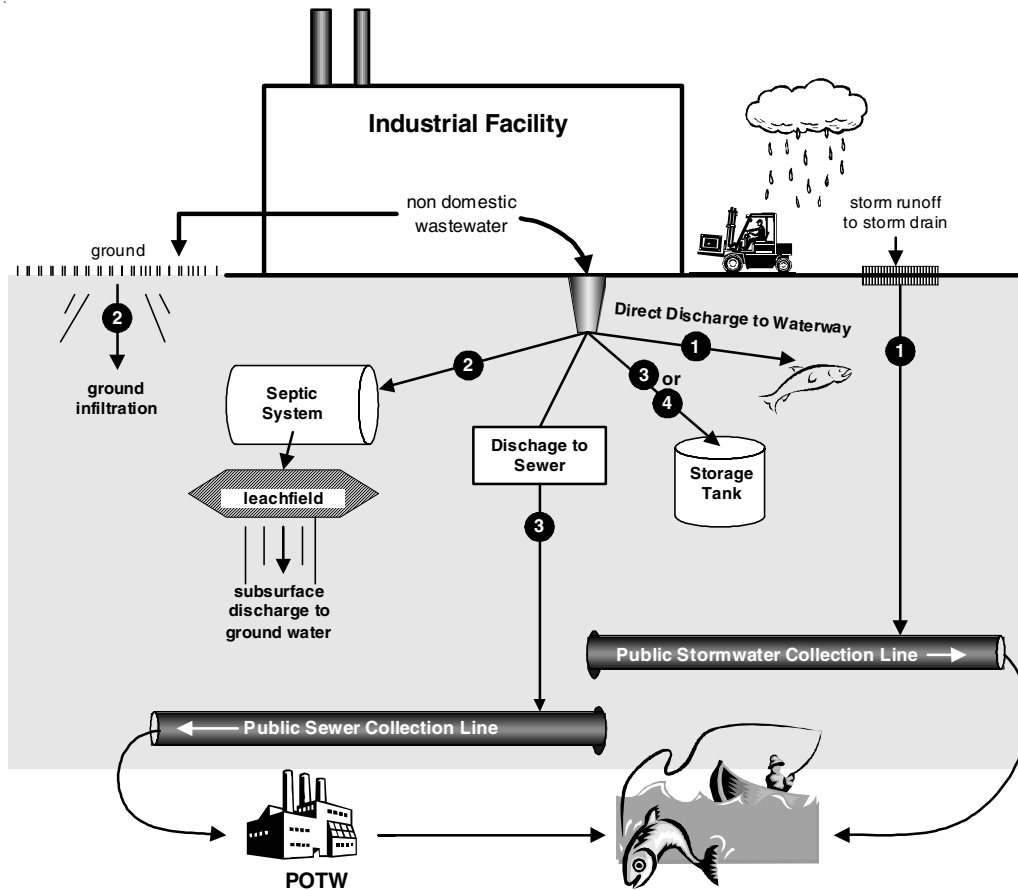
Indirect discharges can enter a POTW through a sanitary sewer or through a combined sewer (See Combined Sewer System picture on following pages). When a sewer system is called “combined” it means that the sewers were designed to carry both storm water and non-storm water (i.e. sanitary and non-domestic source wastewater) to the POTW for treatment. If you are unsure whether your storm sewer system is combined, contact the municipality that owns and operates your system (usually a city or township, public works department). You can give them your address and they should be able to provide the storm and sanitary sewer destinations based upon maps of their sewer system.

As to applicable regulatory programs based upon discharge destination:

- If you have a direct wastewater discharge to surface waters of the state, then you are regulated by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, (DEQ) [National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System](#).
- If your discharge destination is to land, and the water goes into the ground, then the applicable regulations are found within the DEQ, [Ground Water Discharge Permit Program](#) with the general exception of residential septic systems (with discharges less than 10,000 gallons per day). These residential systems are regulated by the local health departments.
- If your wastewater goes to the POTW, then wastewater is regulated under user permits or ordinances of the POTW. In addition, if you are hauling the wastewater to the POTW, then requirements of the DEQ [Hazardous and Liquid Industrial Waste Transporter Program](#) may apply.

More information can be found in the [Michigan Manufacturer’s Guide to Environmental Health and Safety Regulations](#), Chapter 3 or you can call the [Environmental Assistance Center](#) at **1-800-662-9278**.

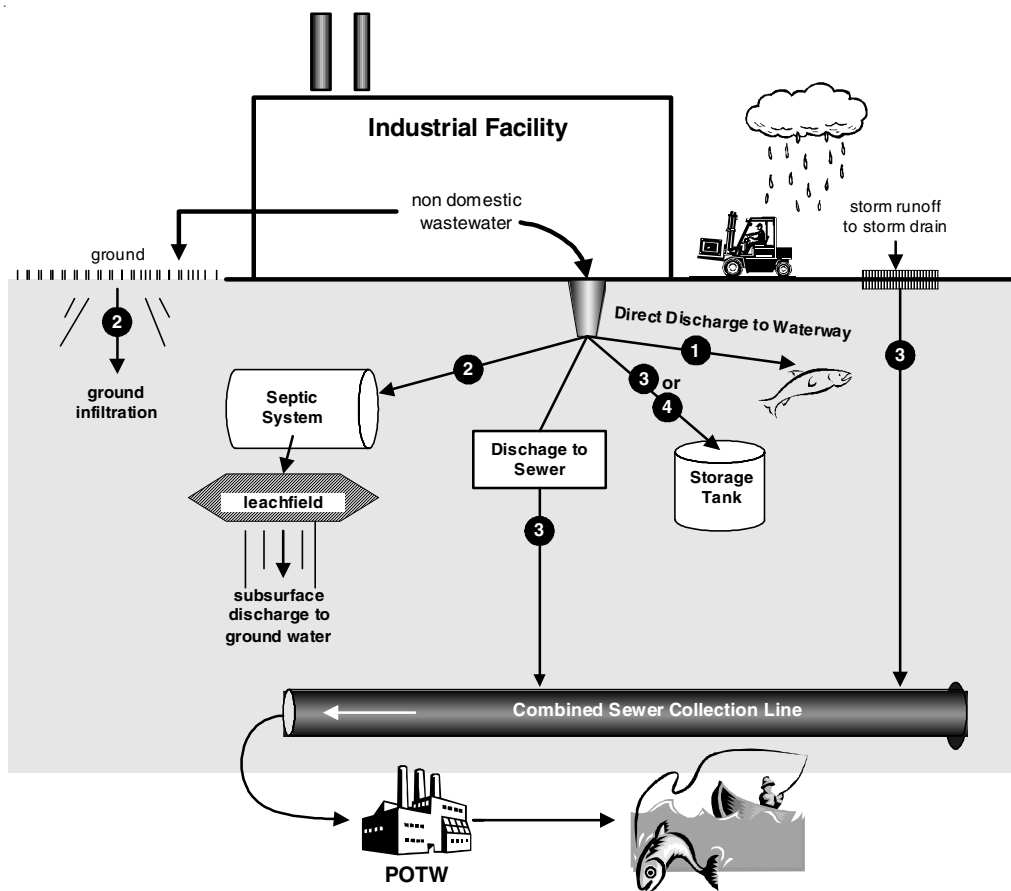
## SEPARATE SEWER SYSTEM



- 1 Subject to National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit Program
- 2 Subject to State Groundwater Permit program
- 3 Subject to Industrial User Permit program
- 4 Other waste disposal facility (i.e., hazardous or liquid industrial waste)

*This diagram is intended to identify the regulatory wastewater authority (i.e. POTW, State of Michigan NPDES or State of Michigan Groundwater Permit Program) that regulates the wastewater based upon wastewater destination. Other regulatory programs will likely apply regarding wastewater management including transportation, storage and secondary containment requirements.*

## COMBINED SEWER SYSTEM



- 1 Subject to National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit Program
- 2 Subject to State Groundwater Permit program
- 3 Subject to Industrial User Permit program
- 4 Other waste disposal facility (i.e., hazardous or liquid industrial waste)

*This diagram is intended to identify the regulatory wastewater authority (i.e. POTW, State of Michigan NPDES or State of Michigan Groundwater Permit Program) that regulates the wastewater based upon wastewater destination. Other regulatory programs will likely apply regarding wastewater management including transportation, storage and secondary containment requirements.*

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