

**Sanitary Sewer Overflow Response Plan Working Committee**  
**SANITARY SEWER OVERFLOW RESPONSE PLAN**

**I. PURPOSE**

The “Municipality / Authority” has structured this Sanitary Sewer Overflow Response Plan to satisfy requirements for such plan, as laid forth within the Administrative Consent Order by and between the Allegheny County Health Department. **Note: Change to, “PA DEP” if municipality has executed consent order with the Department.**

**II. GENERAL**

The Sanitary Sewer Overflow Response Plan (SSORP) is designed to define appropriate actions by “The municipality” upon notification of a possible sanitary sewage overflow caused by problems within the municipally owned sewer system. “Municipality / Authority” shall dispatch the appropriate crews to investigate the possible overflow, identify the responsible party(ies), and provide appropriate customer service to minimize the effects of the overflow on public health and quality of surface waters. The SSORP further includes provisions to ensure safety pursuant to the directions provided by the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD), Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and that notification and reporting is made to the appropriate local and state agencies. For purposes of this SSORP, “confirmed sewage spill” is also sometimes referred to as “sewer overflow,” “overflow,” or “SO.” The effective date of this plan will be referred to as “date.”

**A. Objectives**

The primary objectives of the SSORP are to:

- protect public health and the environment, and
- satisfy the requirements of regulatory agencies and waste discharge permits which address procedures for managing sanitary sewer overflows.

Additional objectives of the SSORP are to:

- provide appropriate customer service, protect the wastewater treatment plants and collection
- provide appropriate customer service, protect the wastewater treatment plants and collection systems including all related appurtenances and personnel, and

protect property from overflows resulting from problems within a publicly owned sanitary sewage system.

**B. Organization of Plan**

The key elements of the SSORP are addressed individually as follows:

|             |                                          |
|-------------|------------------------------------------|
| Section I   | Purpose                                  |
| Section II  | General                                  |
| Section III | Overflow Response Procedure              |
| Section IV  | Regulatory Agency Notification Procedure |
| Section V   | Distribution and Maintenance of SSORP    |

### **III. OVERFLOW RESPONSE PROCEDURE**

The Sanitary Sewer Overflow Response Procedure presents a strategy for the "Municipality / Authority" to mobilize labor, materials, tools and equipment to correct or repair any condition, which may cause or contribute to an un-permitted discharge from a publicly owned sanitary system. A wide range of potential system failures is considered by the plan. Being prepared to respond to system failures could lessen the effect of overflows to surface waters, land, or buildings.

#### **A. Receipt of Information Regarding an SSO**

System employees or the public may detect an overflow. The "Municipality / Authority" is primarily responsible for receiving phone calls from the public notifying the "Municipality / Authority" of possible overflows from the wastewater conveyance and system. The "Municipality / Authority" is then responsible for forwarding the possible overflow information to the appropriate party within the "Municipality / Authority".

The emergency response shall be available 24 hours per day, 365 days of the year.

1. The person at the "Municipality / Authority" receiving the call from the public will obtain all relevant information available regarding the possible overflow including:
  - a. Time and date call was received;
  - b. Specific location and/or address of possible overflow;
  - c. Description of problem; and
  - d. Caller's name and call back phone number.
2. Pump station failures are monitored and received by the "Municipality / Authority." The operator on duty shall convey all information regarding alarms to the "Municipality / Authority" to initiate the investigation.
3. Sanitary sewer overflows detected by any personnel in the course of their normal duties shall be reported to the "Municipality / Authority." Dispatched personnel should record all relevant overflow information and report back information to the "Municipality / Authority." The "Municipality / Authority" shall dispatch additional response crews, equipment or contracted services as necessary.
4. It is the responsibility of the appropriate "Municipality/Authority" personnel or the response crew to gather all spill response data and communicate this data back to the "Municipality / Authority" as soon as possible. Until verified, the report of a possible spill will be referred to as a "sewer inspection" (SI), not a "sanitary sewer overflow" (SSO).
5. A sewer inspection or sewer overflow report should be completed by the maintenance division of the "Municipality / Authority" within 24 hours of the responding crews confirmation of an overflow. The "Municipality /

Authority" is responsible for reviewing, updating, signing, and submitting the final sewer inspection or overflow report form to the proper agency, including but not limited to the ACHD (and/or DEP).

## **B. Dispatch of Appropriate Crews to Site of Sewer**

Failure of any element within the "Municipality / Authority" owned and operated wastewater conveyance system that threatens to cause or causes a sanitary sewage overflow will trigger a response to isolate and correct the problem. Crews and equipment shall be available to respond to any SI/SO locations. Crews will be dispatched to any site of a reported SO as soon as possible.

### Dispatching Crews

- Upon receipt of a report of a sewage overflow, all response crew members shall proceed to the "Municipality / Authority" maintenance facility where they will gather all necessary equipment and resources before proceeding to the site of the SI/SO. Delays or conflicts in assignments and issues regarding equipment and resources should be reported to the "Municipality / Authority" supervisor for resolution.
- The response crew leader should report his/her findings, including possible damage to public system and if assessable to a private party, to the "Municipality / Authority" supervisor. If the "Municipality / Authority" has not received findings from the response crew leader within an appropriate time frame then they should contact the response crew leader to determine the status of the investigation.

### 3. Additional Resources

- Requests for additional personnel, material, supplies, and equipment from response crews shall be received by the response crew leader and conveyed to the "Municipality / Authority."

### 4. Preliminary Assessment of Damage to Private and Public Property

- The response crews should use discretion in assisting property owners/occupants who are affected by a SSO. Be aware that the "Municipality / Authority" could face increased liability for any further damages inflicted to private property during such assistance. Appropriate photographs and video footage, if possible, should be taken of the area of the SSO and impacted area, allowing for thorough documentation of the nature and extent of the impact. Photographs or video tape are to be forwarded to the "Municipality / Authority" for filing with the inspection/overflow report.

### 5. Coordination with Hazardous Material Response

- Upon arrival at the scene of a SSO, should a suspicious substance (e.g., oil sheen, foamy residue) be found on the ground surface, or should a suspicious odor (e.g., gasoline) not common to the sewer system be

detected, response crew leader should contact the "Municipality / Authority" for guidance before taking further action.

- The "Municipality / Authority" will alert the local fire department if necessary. The response crew leader shall await the arrival of the local fire department.
- After arrival of the local fire department, response crew members will take direction from the commanding officer of the local fire department. Only when the commanding officer determines it is safe and appropriate for the response crew members to proceed, can containment, clean-up, and corrective activities be performed in accordance with the SSORP.
- **Remember that vehicle engines, portable pumps, or open flames (e.g., cigarette lighters) can provide the ignition for an explosion or fire should flammable vapors or fluids be present at the site. Maintain a safe distance and observe caution until and after assistance arrives.**

#### 6. Post-Cleanup Activities

- The appropriate "Municipality / Authority" should conduct a follow up visit the site of the overflow, if possible, to ensure the provisions of the SSORP and other directives were properly followed.
- The response crew leader is responsible for confirming that the SI/SO Report was provided to the "Municipality / Authority".

### **C. Overflow Correction, Containment, and Clean-Up**

Blocked sewers, pipe failures, or mechanical malfunctions can cause sanitary sewage overflows. Other natural and man-made disturbances are also possible causes of sanitary sewer overflows.

This section describes specific actions to be performed by response crews during an SSO. The objectives of these actions are to:

- Determine the apparent cause of the overflow, for example whether the cause lies in the publicly owned sewer or a private lateral,
- protect public health, the environment, and property by minimizing SSO impacts as soon as possible;
- establish perimeters with appropriate barricades and control zones with vehicles or natural topography (e.g., hills, berms);
- communicate preliminary overflow information and potential impacts as soon as practical to the regulatory agency, and

- contain the SSO to the maximum extent possible including preventing the discharge of sanitary sewage into surface waters.

Circumstances may arise when "Municipality / Authority" could benefit from the support of private-sector construction assistance.

#### 1. Responsibilities of Response Crew Upon Arrival

It is the responsibility of the first personnel who arrive at the site of a sanitary sewer overflow to protect the health and safety of the public by mitigating the impact of the overflow to the extent possible. Should the overflow not be the responsibility of the "Municipality / Authority", but there is imminent danger to public health, public or private property, or to the waters of the U. S., then prudent action should be taken until the responsible party assumes control and provides remedial actions.

Upon arrival at a SSO the response crew should do the following:

- Determine the cause of the sanitary sewer overflow,
- If necessary, identify and request additional resources to correct the overflow or to determine its cause,
- Determine if private property is impacted. If it is, the "Municipality / Authority" should inform the ACHD (or DEP if appropriate) by faxing the standardized reporting form, which is provided as Appendix "B" to the ACHD Administrative Consent Order, to:

***Allegheny County Health Department  
Chief of Public Drinking Water & Waste Management***

Phone: 412.578.8040

Fax: 412.578.8053

24-hour phone number: 412.687.2243

***Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection***

24-hour phone number: 412.442.4000

Fax: 412.442.4194 or 412.442.4303

- Appropriate personnel, materials, supplies, and/or equipment which can be dispatched to minimize the impact of the overflow.

#### 2. Initial Measures for Containment

Initiate measures to contain the SSO, thereby minimizing impact to public health or the environment.

#### 3. Additional Measures Under Potentially Prolonged Overflow Conditions.

In the event of a prolonged sewer line blockage or a sewer line collapse, a determination should be made to set up a portable by-pass pumping operation around the obstruction.

- Appropriate measures shall be taken to effectively handle the sewage flow.
- Continuous or periodic monitoring shall be implemented as required.
- Regulatory agency issues shall be addressed in conjunction with emergency repairs.

#### 4. Cleanup

Sewer overflow sites are to be promptly cleaned to the highest degree possible after an overflow. No readily identifiable residue is to remain in the area of the SSO.

- The SSO site is to be secured to prevent access to the site by the public until the site has been thoroughly cleaned.
  - Where practical, the area is to be thoroughly flushed and cleaned of any sewage or wash-down water. Solids and debris are to be transported for proper disposal.
- Where appropriate, the overflow site is to be disinfected and ponds formed by the SSO will be pumped dry and the residue will be disposed of properly.

### **D. Overflow Report**

An overflow report shall be completed by the response personnel, who shall promptly notify the “title of appropriate person” within the "Municipality / Authority” when the overflow is eliminated.

To properly complete an overflow report:

- Determine if the SSO may have impacted the surface waters.
- Characterize the SSO by evaluating the following:
  - a. Sewage overflows to stormwater system,
  - b. Preplanned or emergency maintenance jobs involving bypass pumping,
  - c. Overflows where observation or on-site evidence clearly indicates all sanitary sewage was retained on land and did not reach surface water and where cleanup occurs, and
  - d. Any other pertinent information relating to each individual SSO.
- Use one of the following criteria to estimate the start date/time of the SSO:

- a. Information reported to “Municipality / Authority” and later substantiated by a sewer investigator (or response crew, or
  - b. Visual observation.
- Use one of the following criteria to estimate the end date/time of the SSO:
  - a. When the blockage is cleared or flow is controlled or contained; or (When the flow of the sanitary sewer is controlled or contained by removing the blockage???)
  - b. The arrival time of the sewer investigator or response crew, if the overflow stopped between the time it was reported and the time of arrival.
- Estimate the flow rate of the SSO in gallons per minute (GPM) by:
  - a. Direct observations of the overflow or;
  - b. Estimated measurement of actual overflow.
- Estimate the volume of the sanitary sewer overflow when rate of overflow is known by:
  - a. Multiplying the duration of the overflow by the overflow rate.
- Photograph the event.
- Describe any damage to the exterior areas of public/private property.

#### **IV. REGULATORY AGENCY NOTIFICATION PLAN**

The Regulatory Agency Notification Plan establishes procedures that the "Municipality / Authority" shall follow to provide formal notice to the ACHD as necessary in the event of SSOs. The following reporting criteria explain to whom various forms of notification should be sent to, and lists agencies/individuals to be contacted.

##### **Notification Procedure:**

The "Municipality / Authority" should notify the county regulatory agency representatives as soon as possible and keep them abreast of response actions and final corrective actions.

Notification will be by telephone or by fax no later than twenty-four (24) hours or the next working day after an overflow is confirmed. The initial and overflow report should be faxed on the standardized reporting form (Appendix “A”) to:

***Allegheny County Health Department  
Chief of Public Drinking Water & Waste Management***

Phone: 412-578-8040

Fax: 412-578-8053

24-hour phone number: 412.687.2243

***Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection***

Phone: 412.442.4000

Fax: 412.442.4194 or 412.442.4303

**V. DISTRIBUTION AND MAINTENANCE OF SSORP**

Annual updates to the SSORP should be made to reflect all changes in policies and procedures as may be required to achieve its objectives.

**A. Submittal and Availability of SSORP**

Copies of the SSORP and any amendments should be distributed to the following departments and functional positions:

Executive Office Complex – one copy.

Maintenance Division – One copy per operations management personnel.

Plants – one copy per location.

All other personnel who may become incidentally involved in responding to overflows should be familiar with the SSORP. Appended to the SSORP should be a sign off sheet that states that they have read and completely understand the SSORP.

**B. Review and Update of SSORP**

The SSORP should be reviewed and amended as appropriate. The "Municipality / Authority" should:

- Up-date the SSORP with the issuance of a revised or new NPDES permit or state waste discharge permit.
- Review and up-date, as needed the various contact person lists included in the SSORP.