Thank you to Code Enforcement Officers Mike Riley, Keith Vargas and Robin Martinjak along with Tammy Allen from Air Quality for reporting incidents of illegal discharges.

Please help us protect our waterways by reporting any potential illegal discharges to our roads, stormdrains, drainages, and surface waters.
NEW FERTILIZER ORDINANCE

Pinellas County recently adopted a Fertilizer Ordinance (Article XIII, Chapter 58) that regulates the sale and use of products containing nitrogen and/or phosphorous. The ordinance applies to all homeowners, commercial/residential applicators and businesses that sell materials containing fertilizers.

The overall goal of the ordinance is to place restrictions on the sale and use of fertilizers in order to minimize the conveyance of excess nutrients into our local waters through the storm sewer system.

Did you know:

Stormwater runoff containing nitrogen and phosphorous promotes the growth of undesirable plants and algae in our water bodies. This can lead to poor water quality, fish kills and reduced wildlife habitat value.

Most of the water bodies in Pinellas County have been designated as “impaired” by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

The quality of our water resources can be improved with your help.

Pinellas County’s new Ordinance requires:

- Fertilizer containing nitrogen and/or phosphorous cannot be sold (starting in 2011) or applied (starting 2010) to turf or landscape plants between June 1st and September 30th. (The summer rainy season)

- Fertilizers cannot be applied if heavy rains are forecast by the National Weather Service to occur within 24 hours in Pinellas County.
• Nitrogen from fertilizer shall be applied at the recommended rate up to no more than four pounds per 1000 square feet per calendar year. (The label tells you how much Nitrogen (N), Phosphorus(P), and Potassium(K) is in the mix – the higher the first number – i.e. 29-0-5 the more nitrogen is in the mix. If you follow the label directions you should be within the limit. Most apply at the rate of 1 lb per 1000 sq. feet no more than 4 times per year. Your grass will do well with even less than this amount)

• It is recommended that the rates of fertilizer applied be reduced when reclaimed water is used. (Reclaimed water has some nutrients in it.)

• No phosphorous containing fertilizer shall be applied unless a soil test, by a Florida State certified lab, indicates a deficiency.

• Fertilizer containing nitrogen shall not be applied on newly established turf or landscape plants for the first 30 days. (It actually hurts establishment of roots.)

• Granular fertilizers containing nitrogen must contain more than 50% slow release nitrogen. (Check the label!)

• Liquid fertilizers shall not be applied at a rate that exceeds 0.5 pounds per 1000 square feet.

• Fertilizers must not be deposited or left on impervious surfaces (sidewalks, pavement, concrete, etc.) Reclaim or blow/sweep the material into turf area.

• Deflector shields must be used to keep any fertilizer from getting near impervious surfaces (i.e. sidewalks) or surface waters

• Fertilizer must not be applied within ten feet of any wetland or water body, and a recommended six foot low maintenance no-mow zone is recommended adjacent to water bodies and wetlands.

• All grass clippings, vegetative material, and/or vegetative debris may not enter the street gutter, stormdrain, or surface waters.

• Commercial, institutional, and landscape maintenance professionals must be certified according to Florida statute 482.1562. (This requires certification within 12 – 18 months depending upon the service provided)

While these rules may seem a bit complex at first, they are really just easy-to-follow best management practices that many homeowners have been doing already to help improve our water quality. They can actually improve the health of your lawn. Over-fertilization leads to weed growth, thatch and attack by insects. You could also spend less time maintaining your lawn and more time enjoying it!
For specific details of the regulation please contact our office via phone or e-mail.

**Contact Information for possible illicit discharges (727) 464-4425:**

Chip Heintz, cheintz@pinellascounty.org  
Bill Sova, wsova@pinellascounty.org  
Stormwater 24-Hour Watchline (727) 464-5060  
Complaints received from incorporated (city) jurisdictions will be forwarded.

For more information on stormwater and Pinellas County water quality visit the water atlas [www.pinellas.wateratlas.usf.edu/stormwaterEd/](http://www.pinellas.wateratlas.usf.edu/stormwaterEd/)

Illicit Discharge Training Video:  
[http://vstreamint.co.pinellas.fl.us:8080/ramgen/illegaldischarges.rm](http://vstreamint.co.pinellas.fl.us:8080/ramgen/illegaldischarges.rm)