



Due to imminent or recent rain events, the City of West Lafayette Wastewater Treatment Utility may have experienced combined sewer overflows, sending untreated wastewater into the Wabash River.

Some cities, such as West Lafayette, collect both stormwater runoff and sanitary wastewater in the same set of pipes. These are called “combined sewers.” Sometimes when it rains, the combined sewers do not have enough capacity to carry all of the stormwater and wastewater or the Wastewater Treatment Plant cannot accept all of the combined flow.

In this situation, the combined wastewater overflows from the collection system into the Wabash River.

Each overflow point is marked with a warning sign. Any rain or snow melt event could potentially cause a combined sewer overflow depending on the intensity and duration of that event.

There are currently three CSO’s in the West Lafayette collection system WL-003, WL-004, WL-006.

The Wet Weather Treatment Facility provides partial treatment to overflows and discharges via WL-007.

The CSO Relief Interceptor captures the overflow at WL-004 and WL-006. This is carried to the Wastewater Utility and treated.

During extreme storms it is still possible for the overflows to occur at WL-004 or WL-006, when the capacity of the CSO Relief Interceptor is exceeded.

The Utility staff encourages citizens to avoid contact with water downstream from combined sewers. Ingesting sewage-contaminated water can cause sickness.

The staff recommends the following steps for dealing with overflows:

- Avoid contact with urban streams, especially during and three days after rain events.
- Alter recreational activities to ones that do not involve water contact.
- Always wash hands after contacting urban streams, especially before eating.
- Use waterless hand sanitizers at outings that occur near urban streams.

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