



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ALCOSAN LAUNCHES PUBLIC HEALTH ALERTS AS RIVER RECREATION SEASON OPENS

MESSAGES BY TEXT, EMAIL, WEB, HOTLINE, AND FLAGS ON WATERWAYS HELP KEEP COMMUNITY AWARE OF OVERFLOWS DURING WET WEATHER

Temporary overflows in Sharpsburg will end when PSWA completes repairs in Etna

May 1, 2017– Pittsburgh – As Pittsburghers start heading to the rivers for the season, ALCOSAN activated its public health advisory system today, keeping citizens informed through text, email, web and flags posted along the three rivers that detail when sewage overflows occur. These alerts will be posted through October 31.

“During heavy rain – and even snowmelt, which we all hope is done, for now – stormwater pours into the regional sewers, overwhelming the system,” said Jeanne K. Clark, ALCOSAN’s public information officer. “When that happens, the diluted sewage and stormwater overflow into our rivers and streams. Our advisories are designed to help keep the public informed by making sure everyone knows when this occurs, and what activities are affected by the overflows.”

ALCOSAN provides a variety of ways to alert the public, including:

- CSO Flag Program – ALCOSAN staff raise bright orange flags with the acronym CSO (for Combined Sewer Overflow) at [highly visible locations](#) on the Allegheny, Monongahela, and Ohio Rivers. These flags remain up until 48 hours have passed after the overflows have ended, when the river quality returns to normal.
- Email and Text alerts – ALCOSAN sends out electronic alerts between 8 a.m. and 7 p.m. daily. These notices arrive when overflows occur, when overflows end but the rivers may still be impaired, and when the rivers are back to normal. Subscribe to these alerts on ALCOSAN’s website at <http://www.alcosan.org/SewerOverflowAdvisories/CSOTextEmailNotificationSubscription/tabid/184/Default.aspx> - text fees may apply.
- On the ALCOSAN website – The [Sewer Overflow Advisory Key](#) (SOAK) is posted on the home page of the website, detailing both the status of the system, and public health recommendations for activities around and in the rivers and streams.

- On the ALCOSAN Overflow Hotline – Simply call 412-734-6249 for the current status and public health information about activities.

Of special note, overflows during dry weather are occurring at two sites along the Allegheny River at Sharpsburg – A69 near Fifth Street and A70 behind the former Henry Miller Spring plant – which are marked with orange flags. This is due to the Pittsburgh Water and Sewage Authority (PWSA) temporarily discharging drinking water to these overflows to relieve pressure while they make repairs to a large water main in Etna. The discharges will end when repairs are completed.

“Here at ALCOSAN, we are proud to be one of the region’s premiere environmental and public health organizations, treating up to 250 million gallons wastewater daily for 83 Allegheny County communities, and returning the water to the river, often cleaner than the river itself,” said Clark. “We are committed to enhancing public health and our citizens’ quality of life, and making the Pittsburgh region a great place to live, work and play – for everyone.

“Happy boating, fishing and swimming to all!”