



# Controlling CSOs with Sewer Separation

In many older cities, portions of the sewer system carry both sewage and stormwater in a combined sewer system. During storms, a combined sewer system can be overwhelmed, and sewage and stormwater can overflow into our local waterways. This overflow is called combined sewer overflow (CSO). CSOs release pollutants and can be harmful to the environment.

Sewer separation is the conversion of a combined sewer system into two independent systems, sanitary and stormwater.

Sewer separation can be a disruptive, costly, and difficult undertaking. This process typically involves the disconnection of all sources of sanitary sewage flow from the existing sewer lateral leaving buildings, and the construction of a new sanitary-only sewer.

The new sanitary sewers convey sanitary sewage only to the sewage treatment plant, thereby reducing extraneous flows and reducing overflows. Complete sewer separation results in the elimination of all CSO events.

Although sewage is no longer discharged to the waterways with the new separated sewage system, urban stormwater discharging into waterways is still a concern. This can be significant during the early parts of a storm event, which may contain the highest pollutant concentration.

For more information on combined sewer overflow management and sewer separation, visit: [www3.epa.gov/npdes/pubs/sepa.pdf](http://www3.epa.gov/npdes/pubs/sepa.pdf)

