

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS | SANITARY SEWER OVERFLOW (SSO)

What is a Sanitary Sewer Overflow?

A Sanitary Sewer Overflow (SSO) is an unpermitted release of untreated wastewater into the environment.

Why do SSOs occur?

There could be many reasons for an SSO, including, but not limited to, a lack of capacity to treat wastewater at the related plant or a clog or failure in the system of pipes transporting wastewater. The reason is sometimes unrelated to a facility.

What is required to clean up an SSO?

When an SSO occurs, the company responsible is tasked to clean it up as quickly as possible by removing any solid or liquid waste, plus disinfecting the area. This includes, but is not limited to, removing liquid and solid waste from the area, potentially removing impacted soil and distribution of chlorine over the area.

What happens if an SSO is not addressed?

If an SSO is not addressed, enforcement actions could be taken. SSOs in the Johnson Utilities service area have triggered inspections and enforcement actions related to wastewater treatment facilities.

Has Johnson Utilities been penalized for not addressing a SSO?

To issue a penalty, a court process is required. A civil case was filed in Arizona Superior Court on May 22, 2019.

Press Release | [View >](#)

Does ADEQ notify the public through press releases when an SSO occurs?

Each SSO is treated as a unique event and inspection of the SSO location would determine the need for a press release. For example, if the SSO has stopped and cleanup occurred or is actively occurring, a notification may not be issued. If the SSO were ongoing and cleanup had not yet occurred, a notification may be issued.