

April 14, 2020

Woodman's Food Markets

**RE: Liquids leaking from garbage dumpsters.**

Madison General Ordinance (MGO) 7.46 prohibits discharges from garbage containers. Allowing liquids to escape from your dumpster can result in a fine of \$50-\$2000.

When liquids are put in the garbage or a trash compactor, they can saturate the garbage and seep from the dumpster. This liquid, called leachate, is nutrient-rich and can become very acidic through bacterial decomposition. It can corrode metal dumpsters, weaken rubber seals, and dissolves concrete.

When leachate flows from a dumpster onto a hard surface, it is transported via the storm sewer system to our lakes. As bacteria break down the leachate they consume large amounts of oxygen that fish and other aquatic organisms need to survive. Through decomposition, the bacteria convert the leachate into useable nutrients that promote algae growth much like fertilizer spread on a lawn causes the grass to grow green and lush.

If the leachate has entered the City's storm sewer, the City will remove it at your expense. To prevent a leachate discharge, consider the following:

1. Ensure your dumpster has a plug installed. Contact your waste hauler to have a plug installed if it is missing.
2. Keep your dumpster covered. Rain water that collects in a dumpster will form leachate.
3. Consider dumping expired milk and juices down an interior drain. Liquids poured down the sink will be properly treated at the sewage plant and won't end up in our lakes.
4. If you see your dumpster leaking, catch the liquid in a container and dump it down an interior drain until the leak can be fixed.

If you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact Rick Wenta: 225-2396, Environmental Protection Unit, Public Health-Madison and Dane Co.