

Facility Name: *East Chicago Sanitary District*

Facility Location: *5201 Indianapolis Blvd., East Chicago, IN 46312*

Date of Inspection: *August 5, 2015*



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 5

77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60604

SUBJECT: CLEAN WATER ACT INSPECTION REPORT
East Chicago Sanitary District, 5201 Indianapolis Blvd., East Chicago, IN
46312

FROM: Newton Ellens, Pretreatment Program Manager
Water Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Branch, Section 1

BASIC INFORMATION

Facility Name: East Chicago Sanitary District

Facility Type: Publicly-Owned Treatment Works

NPDES Permit Number: IN0022829

Date(s) of Inspection: August 5, 2025

EPA Inspector(s):

1. Newton Ellens, Pretreatment Program Manager
2. William Jones, Environmental Engineer

Facility Representative(s):

1. Thomas Lentz, Operations Supervisor, East Chicago Sanitary District
2. Joseph Wright, Maintenance Supervisor, East Chicago Sanitary District

Other Attendees:

1. Nicholas Ream, Indiana Department of Environmental Management

Contact Email Address: tlenz@eastchicago.com

Inspection Type: Reconnaissance

Background:

On July 31, 2025, the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) emailed the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), stating that there was a potential lateral bore into

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an East Chicago Sanitary District (ECSD) force main on Kennedy Avenue. On August 1, 2025, IDEM emailed EPA, confirming that a contractor had punctured a hole into a 42-inch interceptor; the interceptor transferred waste from the Alder Street Lift Station.

In response to the accident, ECSD started to bypass wastewater from the Alder Street Lift Station to Combined Sewer Overflow #003 (CSO 003), causing a dry weather discharge into the Grand Calumet River.

On August 1, 2025, IDEM required ECSD to sample the discharge from CSO 003 for all pollutants required to be sampled under NPDES Permit #IN0022829, except for Whole Effluent Toxicity.

Kenneth Myers, ECSD's former Director of Wastewater Operations, retired on August 1, 2025.

Staff Interview(s):

During the interview, EPA presented credentials to ECSD, and asked ECSD if it considered any information presented or discussed to be confidential business information. ECSD responded that it did not consider any information presented or discussed to be confidential business information.

ECSD stated the following:

- Ken Myers has retired. Tom Lentz was not told that he was in charge, but he is signing off on discharge monitoring reports.
- Damage to force main:
 - On July 31, 2025, Carlyle, a contractor for the Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO) was directional boring—part of a fiber-optic cable installation. While directional boring, Carlyle punctured a hole into ECSD's force main, located at 151st St. and Kennedy Ave.
 - On August 1, 2025, ECSD started draining sewage from the force main discharge. ECSD estimated it took 24 to 48 hours to drain. The area was dry at the time of the inspection.
 - The directional bore left a five-inch hole in the fore main. At the time of the inspection, ECSD was using a wooden "cork" to plug the hole.
 - ECSD shared with the inspection team that it intends to use a clamp and a special saddle to permanently fix the hole in the force main. ECSD expects the saddle to arrive on August 7 or 8, 2025. The saddle should be installed one day after it arrives.
- Dry weather discharge (CSO 003):
 - On August 1, 2025, sanitary pumps at the Alder Street pump station were shut down. Stormwater pumps at the station then directed the flow to CSO 003.
 - At the time of the inspection, ECSD staff was collecting samples at the Calumet River— (1) at CSO 003, (2) a point upstream of CSO 003, and (3) a point downstream of CSO 003.

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- At the time of the inspection, ECSD had not posted a public notice of the dry weather discharge (at CSO 003).
- Bypass at Roxanna pump station:
 - ECSD shut the Roxanna pump station down, to stop back pressure from the station from flowing to the force main break.
 - The Roxanna pump station typically pumps one million gallons per day.
 - According to ECSD, they then bypassed sanitary wastewater from the Roxanna pump station directly to the Calumet River, to prevent basement backups in the area served by the pump station.
 - ECSD pumps sanitary wastewater from the Roxanna pump station to the Calumet River for 20 minutes at a time.

IDEM stated that ECSD needs to submit a bypass overflow report. At the time of the inspection ECSD had not yet reported the issue.

FACILITY WALK-THROUGH OCCURRED:

Yes

Data Collected and Observations:

ECSD Wastewater Treatment Plant (ECSD WWTP)

- ECSD led EPA and IDEM to the Operations Building, where ECSD searched for flow data at the Alder Street pump station and discharge flow from CSO 003. ECSD could not find the data at the time of the inspection, but committed to sending it to EPA and IDEM at a later date.
- EPA and IDEM entered the ECSD WWTP at 1:05 p.m. and left at 2:30 p.m. CT.

Roxanna Pump Station

- At 2:30 p.m. CT, EPA and IDEM arrived at the Roxanna pump station. There, they met Mike Flores (Maintenance), who stated the following:
 - On August 2, 2015, ECSD installed a hose in the sewer at a point upstream of the pump station and started pumping sanitary wastewater to a wetland adjacent to the Calumet River.
 - ECSD was using a six-inch pump. The pump runs at idle.
 - ECSD pumps wastewater about every two hours. ECSD runs the pump for about one hour at a time.
- EPA and IDEM saw the point where ECSD's hose discharges to a wetland adjacent to the Calumet River.
- IDEM went into the wetland, searching for the location of the Calumet River.

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CSO 003

At 3:12 p.m. CT, EPA and IDEM arrived at CSO 003. Inspectors observed a light-colored, cloudy discharge present at the mouth of the CSO. Inspectors also observed sewage floatables present at the surface of the river water, just beyond the mouth of the CSO.

Force main break

At 3:23 p.m. CT, EPA and IDEM arrived at 151st Street and Kennedy Ave.—the site of the force main hole. The immediate area had been excavated, exposing the damaged force main.

Requested documents:

- Rainfall data (covering from August 31, 2025, to the day when the force main is repaired); and
- CSO bypass report.

Areas of Concern:

1. On August 1, 2025, ECSD began pumping untreated wastewater from its collection system to the Grand Calumet River at CSO 003.
2. To date, ECSD has not issued a public service advisory about the dry weather discharge.
3. On August 1, 2025, IDEM required ECSD to collect samples for pollutants required to be sampled under NPDES Permit IN0022829 (except for Whole Effluent Toxicity). ECSD began collecting samples on August 5, 2025.
4. ECSD emailed a CSO bypass overflow report on August 7, 2025, six days after the bypass began.
5. On August 2, 2025, ECSD started a dry weather discharge from a point upstream of the Roxanna pump station to a wetland adjacent to the Calumet River.

DIGITAL SIGNATURES

Newton Ellens, Pretreatment Program Manager

Report Author Signature: **NEWTON ELLENS** Digitally signed by
NEWTON ELLENS
Date: 2025.08.21
14:30:24 -05'00'

Molly Smith, Section 1 Supervisor

Section Supervisor Signature: **MOLLY SMITH** Digitally signed by
MOLLY SMITH
Date: 2025.08.28
12:31:31 -05'00'