



*Environmental excellence  
beyond clean water...*

# 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 SAFE DURING WET WEATHER***

May 5, 2015– Pittsburgh – As Pittsburghers start heading to the rivers for the season, ALCOSAN activated its public health alert system, keeping the public informed and safe 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 alerts are designed to help keep the public safe by making sure everyone knows when this occurs.”

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.

“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 of dirty and unhealthy 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 our citizens’ quality of life and safety, and making the Pittsburgh region a great place to live, work, and play – for everyone.

“Happy boating, fishing, and swimming to all!”