



# CITY OF PORT WENTWORTH

7224 GA Highway 21 | Port Wentworth, Georgia 31407

Phone (912) 964-4379 | Fax (912) 966-7429

[www.cityofportwentworth.com](http://www.cityofportwentworth.com)

Received

FEB. 17 2021

Coastal District  
EPD

February 16, 2021

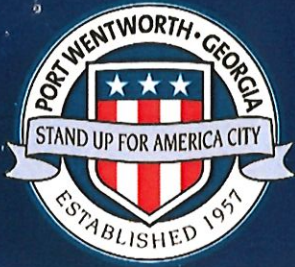
Mr. David Lyle  
Program Manager  
Coastal District – GAEPD  
400 Commerce Center Drive  
Brunswick, Georgia 31523

**Re: Compliant Investigation – CTS 95484**  
**NPDES Permit No. GA0083314**  
**Chatham County**

This letter is in response to EPD's February 1, 2021, complaint investigation letter for the referenced permit. The letter alleged that nine major sewage spills occurred in the City of Port Wentworth during the periods between June 12, 2019, and January 16, 2021. In response to your letter, the City of Port Wentworth conducted an investigation by reviewing its internal records and by consulting with the City's Water and Sewer Operations contractor, Clearwater Solutions (CWS). The City's investigation revealed the following:

According to information received from CWS, its records or recollections were that three (3) "minor" sewage spill incidents occurred, rather than the nine spills alleged to have occurred. The City itself has no internal records indicating that major sewage incidents occurred between June 12, 2019, and January 16, 2021, in the City of Port Wentworth. Because no reports of major spills were made to City officials, either in writing or verbally, the City was not prompted to act and respond under EPD Rule 391-3-6-.05. The City does provide the following information that its investigation revealed:

1. November 18, 2019: The City learned about this spill when a resident posted photographs on social media. The former City Manager went to the scene and advised CWS that a manhole had overflowed at 319 Osteen St. and debris was in the resident's yard. CWS quickly responded and when CWS employees arrived at the site, all sewer lines were checked and no overflow or leaks were observed. The water was not exiting the manhole at the time of inspection. Some debris on the ground was observed, cleaned up and lime was spread where the debris was found. The lift station related to this particular manhole is the Amadale Road lift station. The Amadale Road lift station was checked thoroughly on November 18, 2019. All submersible pumps were operating and wet well operating levels were adjusted. The amount of overflow water observed



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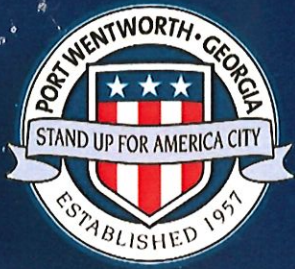
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was not believed to be in excess of 10,000 gallons. According to CWS, there was no observable evidence that any wastewater entered State waters on this date. The permanent bypass pump at the Armadale location was not operating properly so a portable bypass pump was connected to compensate for the excessive rain event which led to this overflow event. Further, the estimated volume of the spill is not known due to the system operating normally when CWS arrived at the scene. As stated above, the City first learned about this incident via social media. The incident was not formally reported to City officials by CWS at the time as it was not considered to be a major spill.

2. April 22, 2020: CWS received a call from a resident stating that the manhole at the intersection of Osteen Street and Armadale Road had overflowed and debris was on the ground. The suspected cause of the overflow was due to excessive rainfall occurring on the previous night. When CWS arrived, the system is operating normally. The debris was cleaned up and lime was spread over the affected area. The submersible pump at the Armadale lift station was checked and found to be working properly. The portable bypass pump at the lift station was checked and it was discovered that the pump had lost its suction. The portable bypass pump was replaced and has since been operating normally. The amount of water observed was not believed to be in excess of 10,000 gallons. According to CWS, there was no observable evidence that any wastewater entered State waters on this date. Further, the estimated volume of the spill is not known due to the system operating normally when CWS arrived at the scene. The City was not aware of this spill. The incident was not reported to City officials by CWS at the time as it was not considered to be a major spill.
3. January 11, 2021: CWS received an alarm from the SCADA system that the "Waffle House" lift station on Highway 21 had lost power. Upon arrival at the lift station, CWS discovered that a Georgia Power fuse had blown on the electrical supply line to the lift station. CWS immediately contacted Georgia Power and, to mitigate the situation, shut down nearby upstream lift stations to reduce the flow entering the "Waffle House" lift station until power could be restored. CWS primed the lift station bypass pump and during this process, it is estimated that approximately 300 gallons of wastewater was discharged from the manhole inside of the lift station which was contained. After the bypass pump was primed, the water reentered the manhole and was pumped to the wastewater treatment plant. Soon thereafter, Georgia Power arrived on scene and reestablished power to the lift station. CWS cleaned up the area around the manhole and spread lime to the affected area. According to CWS, no wastewater entered waters of the State. CWS is currently replacing a valve on the bypass pump to assure quicker prime. The City was not



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aware of this spill. The incident was not reported to City of Port Wentworth officials as it was not considered to be a major spill.

The City of Port Wentworth has no current information about spills other than the information related above. The City reserves the right to respond to additional information that the EPD, or others, relate in the future about other alleged spills. Finally, the City is modifying its policy and will modify its contract with CWS going forward to report "all" spills to EPD and City Officials, regardless of the 10,000 gallon and State Waters threshold provisions.

Sincerely,

**Edwin L. Booth**

City Manager, City of Port Wentworth

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