CITY OF EAST CHICAGO

STORM WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Stop Sewer Backups

How to Safeguard Your Home and the Environment by disconnecting downspouts, and sump pumps.

Connected downspouts and sump pumps--what are they?

Many older homes have gutters and sump pumps connected directly to the sanitary sewer. This means that rain from the roof and ground water from the pumps runs directly into the sewer. Not all downspouts are connected to the sanitary sewer, some may discharge into a storm drain. Contact Stormwater Management to find out if your connected downspout and sump pumps discharges into the sanitary sewer.

Why is this a problem?

The problem is too much water. Sanitary sewer systems can only handle a certain amount of water. During a rainstorm, water gets into the sewer from connected downspouts and sump pumps. In a neighborhood of 200 homes it only takes six to eight sump pumps working full time in wet weather to cause sewer backups. When there is too much water for the system, the excess has to go somewhere, and that somewhere is often somebody's basement, a manhole, or the Grand Calumet River. The City of East Chicago has a legal requirement**, (Ordinance No. 2835) which was passed on May of 1964** to stop rain water from flowing to our sanitary sewers. With an increase in water flow this becomes a problem, because the wastewater treatment plant has to treat the extra water.

Why should you care?

Sewage overflows are messy, costly, and a threat to health and the environment.

Health. Raw sewage contains microorganisms that can cause diseases such as hepatitis, giardiasis, and gastroenteritis.

Long term environmental damage. Raw sewage in streams and lakes can cause illnesses in fish, kill aquatic life, and make the water unusable for swimming, fishing, and as a drinking water source.

Cost Factor. The Sanitary District ends up treating the extra water, The utility may also have to pay fines when raw sewage is released to the environment.

What can you do?

Disconnection is usually a simple, relatively inexpensive process. Stormwater Management will be able to tell whether your downspouts and sump pumps are connected to the sanitary sewer. If you are not familiar with plumbing work, please contact a licensed and bonded plumber or Stormwater Management for assistance at **(219)391-8466.**