

## **Mandatory Downspout Disconnection**

### **Helping to prevent basement flooding and improve water quality**

In 2007, Toronto City Council approved mandatory downspout disconnection for the combined sewer service area of the City of Toronto. The new bylaw requires homeowners who live within the affected area to disconnect their homes' downspout from the City's sewer system within three years.

#### **What is a downspout?**

A downspout is a pipe that carries rainwater/snowmelt from the roof of your home or eavestrough down to a drain pipe (usually connecting to the sewer system) or to the ground.

#### **What is downspout disconnection?**

Downspout disconnection is the process by which your existing downspout is cut (aprox. 9 inches) above the drain pipe connection. An elbow and an extension are then added to the connection in order to divert rainwater and snowmelt from flowing into the drain pipe. A splash pad may also be attached at the end of the downspout to prevent flooding.

#### **What does the new mandatory DDP require of homeowners?**

Certain homeowners will be required to disconnect their homes downspout from the City's combined sewer system where feasible and within three years.

#### **What is a combined sewer?**

Combined sewers carry both stormwater and sewage to wastewater treatment plants. Many parts of Toronto, built before the 1960's, are serviced by combined sewers. When it rains or snows, the amount of stormwater may overload the sewer system and cause it to release untreated sewage into our lake, rivers and streams.

#### **Why is the City implementing a mandatory program in the core area of the city?**

Reducing stormwater from the system in the combined sewer areas would significantly reduce the risk of basement flooding and greatly improve water quality - keeping our beaches clean for swimming.

#### **How does disconnecting my downspout help prevent basement flooding?**

Disconnecting your downspout from the sewer system will help reduce the amount of stormwater that is sent through the combined sewers. Less stormwater in the system will help prevent wastewater from backing up through sewer pipes where it can escape through floor drains or any other low lying plumbing fixtures in your basement.

**What are other benefits of downspout disconnection?**

- Helps reduce the amount of stormwater sent through the sewer system which can lead to Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) to our rivers, streams and the lake.
- Places fewer burdens on the sewer system, overall. This leads to lower energy costs, increased effectiveness of wastewater treatment facilities—producing fewer green house gas emissions.
- Helps to replenish and protect the groundwater table and reduces and delays stormwater runoff—helping to prevent flash flooding in rivers and streams.

**What specific areas of the City are affected by the new mandatory DDP?**

The new mandatory program will, initially, include properties located in the core of the city served by combined sewers (stormwater and sanitary sewers combined into a single pipe.) Specific wards effected by the program include: 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32 and portions of Wards 11, 12, 15, 16, 25, 26, 35, 36, and 37.

**Note: Map of wards affected by the mandatory DDP on page 3.**

**How will the mandatory DDP be enforced?**

There will be enforcement after the three year phase-in period and fines may be issued for non-compliance. There will also be exemptions issued for certain properties where City staff determine a disconnection is not feasible. For example, if the downspout is located near areas of property where it could be unsafe for water to drain or if your home has roof water leaders (downspouts encased in the wall of a structure), then you may be eligible for an exemption from the mandatory program.

**I live on a fixed income - what provisions have been made for low income homeowners?**

Financial assistance for those with a gross household income of \$40,000 or less has been included in the mandatory program.

**For more information visit [toronto.ca/water](http://toronto.ca/water) or call 416-338-8888.**

## Mandatory Downspout Disconnection Program for Combined Sewer Service Area

