

Basement Flooding Protection Program

Fast Facts

Updated: November 2019

1) Water remains on our street for some time after a storm - is this ok?

Our streets are designed to carry stormwater flows that exceed the capacity of the storm sewer. Temporary ponding on streets is expected during major rain storms.

2) I have experienced flooding, yet sewer upgrades are not planned for my street.

Why?

Flooding issues could be the result of any upstream or downstream system overloaded capacity, bottlenecks and/or constraints. Upgrades are aimed at improving the overloaded system upstream or relieving the system downstream of the flooding location. These system upgrades will improve areas on adjacent streets and this is why works are not planned for every street.

Flooding can also be caused by private property issues (e.g. poor lot grading or drainage, clogged/blocked rear-yard catchbasins, cracks/leaks in private side service laterals, and/or cracks/leaks in your home's foundation, basement walls or basement windows or door). In these cases, sewer system upgrades would not resolve flooding on your property. These issues are the responsibility of the homeowner.

3) Can't the City just increase the size of all the sewers to handle extreme storms?

Unfortunately it is not as simple as making the pipes bigger. The challenge is which pipes, how big to make them, and how it will affect other residents. Other constraints can include space availability, conflicts with existing or proposed future infrastructure, basement elevations, pipe depth and environmental impacts. The variability in the amount of rainfall and how fast it falls is so vast, that it is impractical to design a pipe system to capture it all. As well, City Council approved funding priority and availability is also a factor in implementing these sewer system upgrades.

4) Will this study provide a solution to my backyard drainage issues?

The City's Basement Flooding Environmental Assessment (EA) studies are aimed at addressing flooding that originates from the City's right-of-way or property i.e. roads and sewer infrastructure, not on private property. Flooding on private property that is a result of poor surface drainage conditions due to low topography or poor lot grading is outside the scope of this EA and is the responsibility of the homeowner.

Residents are encouraged to speak with a landscaper or contractor to discuss drainage issues and options for their backyards.

5) My neighbour's downspouts are draining onto my property. What should I do?

Discharge from a downspout should be contained on your property so not to affect or cause damage to a neighbouring property. If your neighbour's downspouts carry water onto your property, speak to your neighbour as a first step. You can also call **311** to report the problem.

6) I installed a backwater valve in my basement and my home still got flooded. How is this possible?

Flooding can occur for many different reasons. Property owners are encouraged to speak with a licensed plumber or contractor to determine whether the devices are installed correctly and at the right location e.g. some basements have more than one floor drain. Property owners are also responsible for proper and routine cleaning and maintenance of these devices to ensure they are in good working order.

A correct type and CSA approved backwater valve is necessary to protect backups to basement floor drains. For additional information, visit toronto.ca/water.

7) Why should I report flooding incidents to 3-1-1? Will that affect the value of my property?

While it is not mandatory for you to report instances of flooding to the City, it is recommended. City staff will review the problem, and attempt to determine the source(s) of the flooding and include solutions if found to be a system deficiency. Remember to record the "reference number" provided to you so you may refer back to the work order to track the case. You are encouraged to call 3-1-1 at any time.

8) Are new housing development in this area responsible for flooding my neighborhood?

All new housing developments must meet City standards to provide for sufficient stormwater drainage managements before being approved.