

Foundation Drainage Policy

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City of Toronto – Foundation
Drainage Policy

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1.0 Objectives

The objectives of the Foundation Drainage Policy ("Policy") are to preserve capacity in the City of Toronto's ("City's") sewer systems for the conveyance of sanitary sewage and *Stormwater*, to accommodate future development growth, and to protect receiving watercourses and Lake Ontario from adverse effects associated with the discharge of *Foundation Drainage*.

2.0 Applicability

This Policy applies to all development applications, including but not limited to applications under the Planning Act (except for Committee of Adjustment applications), or where a zoning requirement is to be satisfied, effective January 1, 2022, and as amended October 1, 2026.

3.0 Definitions

Brownfield Property – Properties where past industrial or commercial activities may have left contamination behind.

Combined Sewer – A sewer intended to function simultaneously as a storm sewer and a sanitary sewer.

Dedicated Storm Sewer – A storm sewer that conveys flows directly to a receiving watercourse or to Lake Ontario, with no connection or interaction with the sanitary or *Combined Sewer* system(s).

Dry Weather Flow – Flow in sewers representing typical conditions with no rainfall events or snow melt.

Emergency Discharge – Discharge of *Foundation Drainage* to the City's sewer system for a period of less than 12 months per application, required for emergency repair of *On-site Management* measures.

Emergency Foundation Drainage Infrastructure – *Foundation Drainage* infrastructure that can be temporarily connected to the City's sanitary or *Combined Sewer* system through a control maintenance access hole to facilitate the *Emergency Discharge* of *Foundation Drainage*, designed and operated in accordance with the City's Foundation Drainage Guidelines. *Emergency Foundation Drainage Infrastructure* is to be disconnected from the City's sewer system before and after *Emergency Discharge* has taken place.

Foundation Drainage – *Infiltrated Stormwater*, or *Groundwater*, or both, that may be collected in a drain installed at the foundation of a structure.

Groundwater – Water that exists in the saturated zone in sub-surface soil.

Infiltrated Stormwater – *Stormwater* that enters the unsaturated zone in sub-surface soil, located above the *Maximum Anticipated Groundwater Level*, during rainfall events or snow melt.

Long-term Discharge – Discharge of *Foundation Drainage* to the City's sewer system for a period of more than 12 months.

Maximum Anticipated Groundwater Level – Estimated upper level of the saturated zone in the sub-surface soil, based on site-specific monitoring and an allowance for seasonal and multi-year fluctuations in *Groundwater*, determined in accordance with the City's Foundation Drainage Guidelines.

On-site Management – Management of *Foundation Drainage* on private property, within the boundaries of the development site, without discharging to the City's sewer system. *On-site Management* measures may include, but are not limited to, constructing foundations above the *Maximum Anticipated Groundwater Level*, discharging *Groundwater* into infiltration galleries, using *Groundwater* in greywater systems or constructing watertight foundations.

Qualified Professional – A person with knowledge, training and experience in the pertinent discipline, and who is a qualified expert in the relevant critical area or subject matter.

Stormwater – Water from rainfall, other natural precipitation or the melting of snow or ice, or a combination of the foregoing.

Short-term Discharge – Discharge of *Foundation Drainage* to the City's sewer system for a period of 12 months or less.

Temporary Connection – A connection from *Emergency Foundation Drainage Infrastructure* to the City's sewer system that may be required to facilitate the *Emergency Discharge* of *Foundation Drainage*. All works and costs associated with a *Temporary Connection* are to be undertaken by the development applicant or owner.

4.0 Policy Statements

- 4.1 *Long-term Discharge of Foundation Drainage* to the City's sanitary sewer system is not permitted.
- 4.2 *Foundation Drainage* from the interception or extraction of *Groundwater* from confined aquifers is not permitted to any of the City's sewer systems.
- 4.3 *Long-term Discharge of Foundation Drainage* containing only *Infiltrated Stormwater* is permitted to the City's storm or, where storm sewers do not exist to service the development site, to the *Combined Sewer* system if the following conditions have been met to the satisfaction of the General Manager of Toronto Water:
- a. A *Qualified Professional* with a P.Eng. or P.Geo. licence has deemed that the lowest elevation of any proposed structure will be higher than the *Maximum Anticipated Groundwater Level*, in accordance with *Groundwater* monitoring requirements in the City's Foundation Drainage Guidelines.
 - b. The following requirements have been satisfied:
 - i. A Stormwater Management Report, prepared by a *Qualified Professional* with a P.Eng. licence in accordance with the Stormwater Management Report Terms of Reference, demonstrates that water management targets of the City's Wet Weather Flow Management Guidelines will be met, including quantity and quality targets that account for the total discharge under wet weather flow conditions from the site (i.e., inclusive of both *Infiltrated Stormwater* and *Stormwater*).
 - ii. Where discharges are proposed to the *Combined Sewer* system, a Servicing Report, prepared by a *Qualified Professional* with a P.Eng. licence in accordance with the Servicing Report Terms of Reference, confirms that applicable sewer capacity criteria will be met in accordance with the City's Design Criteria for Sewers and Watermains, including peak flow estimations for *Foundation Drainage*.
 - c. A *Qualified Professional* deems *Foundation Drainage* to be acceptable for surface water discharge by confirming that:
 - i. The development site is not a *Brownfield Property*, and no potentially contaminating activity has occurred on the site; or
 - ii. The development site is a *Brownfield Property* where the filing of a

Record of Site Condition, in accordance with Part XV.1 of the Environmental Protection Act, confirms appropriate risk management measures have been implemented.

4.4 *Long-term Discharge of Foundation Drainage* containing *Groundwater* is permitted to a *Dedicated Storm Sewer* if the following conditions have been met to the satisfaction of the General Manager of Toronto Water:

- a. A *Qualified Professional* deems that the discharged *Foundation Drainage* will meet the applicable quality limits of Table 2 in Toronto Municipal Code – Chapter 681, Sewers, without pre-treatment, with the exception of Total Suspended Solids (TSS). For TSS, compliance with the Wet Weather Flow Management Guidelines is required; refer to the City's Foundation Drainage Guidelines for details.
- b. *Foundation Drainage* shall be discharged to a *Dedicated Storm Sewer*. Under no circumstance shall *Foundation Drainage* be routed to or otherwise interact with the sanitary or *Combined Sewer* system(s); refer to the City's Foundation Drainage Guidelines for details.
- c. A Stormwater Management Report, prepared by a *Qualified Professional* with a P.Eng. licence in accordance with the Stormwater Management Report Terms of Reference, demonstrates that:
 - i. The maximum dry-weather discharge rate for *Foundation Drainage* is 3 L/s/ha for sites > 0.7 ha, and 2 L/s for sites ≤ 0.7 ha, where the drainage area is equal to the property area; refer to the City's Foundation Drainage Guidelines for details.
 - ii. Under wet weather conditions, the total discharge from the site (i.e., inclusive of both *Foundation Drainage* and *Stormwater*) must meet the quantity and quality targets of the City's Wet Weather Flow Management Guidelines.
- d. A *Qualified Professional* deems that:
 - i. The development site is not a *Brownfield Property*, and no potentially contaminating activity has occurred on the site; or
 - ii. The development site is a *Brownfield Property* where the filing of a Record of Site Condition, in accordance with Part XV.1 of the Environmental Protection Act, confirms appropriate risk management measures have been implemented.

- 4.5 *Emergency Foundation Drainage Infrastructure* may be installed on private property to facilitate emergency repairs to *On-site Management* measures. At the time of emergency repair, *Emergency Discharge of Foundation Drainage* via a *Temporary Connection* may be permitted to the City's sanitary or *Combined Sewer* system under *Dry Weather Flow* conditions, and in accordance with the following requirements:
- a. All Design Requirements shall be satisfied in accordance with the City's Foundation Drainage Guidelines.
 - b. All requirements for obtaining and maintaining a Private Water Discharge Permit for *Emergency Discharge* will be satisfied when *Emergency Discharge* is required; refer to the City's Foundation Drainage Guidelines for details.
- 4.6 The City reserves the right to undertake a peer-review of studies and reports submitted by the applicant to confirm findings and conclusions.

5.0 Exemption Authority

- 5.1 At the written request of the development applicant or owner, the General Manager of Toronto Water, at their sole discretion, may exempt provisions of the Policy to allow the development site owner to apply for *Long-term Discharge of Foundation Drainage*, under the following circumstances:
- a. Where a *Qualified Professional* demonstrates to the satisfaction of the General Manager of Toronto Water that *On-site Management of Foundation Drainage* is not technologically feasible and *Long-term Discharge of Foundation Drainage* is required to avoid hazardous impacts (i.e., adverse impacts on the subject structure, adjacent structure(s), infrastructure or the environment); or
 - b. Where the development applicant or owner demonstrates that Policy amendments occurring during the application process have resulted in unreasonable impacts to project submission timelines or milestones (“extenuating circumstances”).
- 5.2 Exemption conditions shall not be less restrictive than conditions described in Section 4.0.
- 5.3 Upon the receipt of an exemption:
- a. *Long-term Discharge of Foundation Drainage* to the City’s storm or, where storm sewers do not exist to service the development site, to the *Combined Sewer* system may be permitted under the following conditions:
 - i. All requirements for obtaining a Private Water Discharge Agreement will be satisfied for *Long-term Discharge*.
 - ii. A Hydrological Report, prepared by a *Qualified Professional* in accordance with the Hydrological Review Terms of Reference, deems that the *Foundation Drainage* will meet applicable quality limits of Toronto Municipal Code – Chapter 681, Sewers, via reasonable and practical measures that are operationally and financially sustainable.
 - iii. A Stormwater Management Report, prepared by a *Qualified Professional* with a P.Eng. licence in accordance with the Stormwater Management Report Terms of Reference, demonstrates that stormwater management targets of the City’s Wet Weather Flow Management Guidelines will be met.
 - iv. Where discharges are proposed to the *Combined Sewer* system, a

Servicing Report, prepared by a *Qualified Professional* with a P.Eng. licence in accordance with the Servicing Report Terms of Reference, confirms that all applicable sewer capacity criteria will be met in accordance with the City's Design Criteria for Sewer and Watermains, including peak flow estimations for *Foundation Drainage*.

- b. *Long-term Discharge of Foundation Drainage* to the City's sanitary system may be permitted, under the following conditions:
 - i. All requirements for obtaining a Private Water Discharge Agreement will be satisfied for *Long-term Discharge*.
 - ii. A Hydrological Report, prepared by a *Qualified Professional* in accordance with the Hydrological Review Terms of Reference, deems that the *Foundation Drainage* will meet applicable quality limits of Toronto Municipal Code – Chapter 681, Sewers, via reasonable and practical measures that are operationally and financially sustainable.
 - iii. A Servicing Report, prepared by a *Qualified Professional* with a P.Eng. licence in accordance with the Servicing Report Terms of Reference, confirms that all applicable sewer capacity criteria will be met in accordance with the City's Design Criteria for Sewer and Watermains, including peak flow estimations for *Foundation Drainage*.