

Sump Pump Questions and Answers

Q.	Who will be inspected during the program?
A.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Properties that were not inspected during the last inspection program. • Properties that failed or that unknown discharge points during the last inspection. • Any additional areas of concern may be randomly selected for inspection.
Q.	What happens if I do not have a sump pump?
A.	You still need to have the inspector verify this information.
Q.	What happens if I am not at home when the inspector comes?
A.	If you are not at home or if it is inconvenient just then, don't worry. The inspector will leave a door hanger with a number for you to call and set up a convenient time for inspection.
Q.	What happens if I do not let the sump pump inspector into my home?
A.	A surcharge of \$100 will be added to your monthly wastewater bill until your home/business sump pump is inspected.
Q.	What is the problem with sump pump discharge to the sanitary sewer?
A.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Backup of wastewater in basements is costly to clean up and creates potential health hazards. • Over 40 million gallons of clean water enters the sanitary sewers and unnecessarily increases the costs for treatment at the wastewater treatment facility.
Q.	Can I switch my discard pipe to the sanitary sewer system during the winter months?
A.	No, this will not be permitted. There is no feasible way to verify that the connection will be switched back to an exterior outlet in the spring. Based on actual experiences in other communities, it is expected that people would tend to leave it hooked up to the sanitary sewer system, defeating the purpose of this program. It is recommended that people attach one 6 - 8 foot long 1.5" diameter PVC outlet pipe to the discharge at the house during the winter. This type of system has very little chance of freezing. For extra protection, a heat tape may be attached to the pipe.
Q.	What happens if my drain tile discharges directly into a sanitary sewer main or old tile line?
A.	The inspection program will check for obvious signs of cross connections, but it is not proposed to go into in-depth inspections for these type of connections. These connections used to be a standard practice in house construction, but are no longer permitted. Many older homes are hooked up to old tile lines that may have collapsed or been disconnected. There is not a clear cost-benefit to the City in identifying and/or correcting these illegal connections, however people who have had problems with back-ups from these type of connections should strongly consider correcting the problem. The city does periodic televising of sewer lines, and may do smoke and dye testing to identify some of these problem systems that effect the municipal sewer system in the future.
Q.	Do I need a permit to correct sump pump discharge?
A.	Not unless you plan to connect directly into an existing City storm sewer structure or tile line. A direct connection to the City's storm sewer system will require a permit to initiate Gopher State One-Calls for utility locations. There will be a fee so that connections to the system can be inspected by City staff to determine if the connections were properly installed.
Q.	Where can I run the sump pump hose? What type of hose works best?
A.	<p>You should run your sump pump hose at least 6 - 10' away from your house to avoid it "recycling" back into the house. It is also all right to run it on your front or back yard, or to the street. You should not run the hose through the curb and gutter. Although this has been allowed in the past there has been significant damage to the street in some areas due to poor workmanship and excessive moisture. Try also to avoid running the water directly onto your neighbor's property. The City receives numerous complaints from neighbors about wet yards and streets, but this will be difficult to avoid.</p> <p>Most people use the flexible, black hose that can be moved around easily. This works great most of the time, but please be aware that this pipe's capacity can be greatly reduced if it is rolled up or extremely curvy, and many people have problems when it is not properly located or unfolded during a storm. It also is not recommended to use this type of hose in the winter. The smooth, white PVC pipe (1 1/2" diameter) has more capacity and works better in situations where you do not need to move the hose around.</p>

Q.	How can I prevent or reduce water problems in my basement?
A.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Install rains gutters on your house and direct the downspouts away from your home. If you already have rain gutters, make sure that they are installed correctly and are cleaned out regularly, and that the downspouts are draining at least 3-5 feet away from your foundation. 2. Shape any landscaping to grade away at least 5 feet from your home's foundation.<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Soils around a house tend to compact and drop after construction, creating a situation in which yard drainage may be directed up next to the house, increasing the potential for water intrusion.b. Many people fill in this area with landscaping rock, which may hide the actual soil slope under them, and has the potential to create an area next to the house where water can build up. You may need to remove the rock, add clay soil to grade away from the house and then reinstall the rock or other landscaping.c. Look for any obstructions in your yard that may prohibit surface water from flowing away from your home, or through your yard. This often happens when a storage shed is built too close to your home or is blocking drainage in the back of your lot. Often drainage swales in rear yards or between home are blocked during landscaping. Also it is common to see sand boxes, gardens or other items that may block drainage. It is important that the water can run out to a curb line or storm sewer drain without being blocked.