

Helping Hands

AN INFORMATIONAL NEWSLETTER FOR THE RESIDENTS OF ST. CLAIR SHORES

Cleaning up the mess ...after the flood or sewage back-up

... a word from the city manager

The City of St. Clair Shores regrets that you may have experienced a basement flooding or a sewer back-up.

Hopefully, the information contained in this special edition newsletter will provide you with ways to clean-up safely and steps to prevent future problems.

We strongly urge you to check with your homeowner's insurance policy to see if coverage is provided.

The City takes responsibility for the cleaning and maintenance of our storm and sanitary lines. If the back-up was caused by a malfunction of the City's sewer system or a plug in the main sewer line, call the Finance Dept. at 447-3322 to file a claim with our insurance.

*If flood water or sewage fill your basement, you **must** clean properly to prevent you and your family from becoming sick or injured. **Do not bring children into the flooded area during clean-up!***

The following are suggestions on how to clean-up a flood or sewage problem.



CLEANING AND SANITIZING

1. Drain all flood waters and/or sewage by natural draining or pumping.
2. Remove dirt, soil and debris from all surfaces that came in contact with flood waters.
3. Wash down all walls, floors and surfaces that flood water or sewage touched with clean, warm or hot water and a low suds detergent.
4. Rinse again with warm or hot water.
5. Sanitize by rinsing walls, floors and surfaces using one of the following mixtures:
2 1/2 tablespoons (tbs.) of Lysol or Pine-Sol per

gallon of water used, or 8 tablespoons (TBS) of laundry bleach (i.e. Clorox, Roman Cleanser) in each gallon of water used.

6. Air the area by opening windows or using fans.
7. Prevent tracking flood debris and sewage into clean areas.

UTILITIES

1. Have the utility companies shut off the gas and electricity.
2. **Do Not** touch the fuse box or any plugged-in cords or appliances until the electricity is shut off. Touching these could result in electrocution.

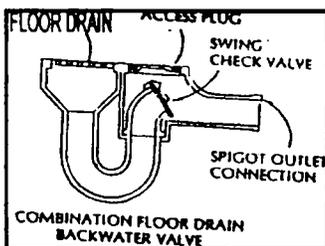
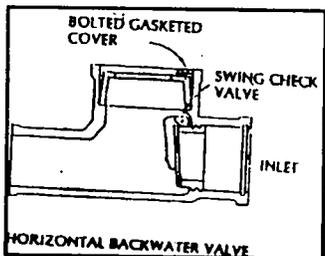
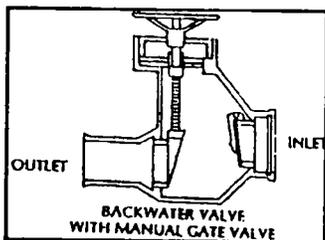
3. If an electrical appliance motor or its controls are submerged under water, **do not** start it until consulting with the dealer or service company.

4. Do not relight appliances until checked by the gas company. Make sure all pilot lights are on before relighting burners.
5. **Do not** light matches until the gas is turned off. If there is a gas leak, it could cause an explosion.

FOOD/CLOTHING

1. Destroy and discard **all** contaminated bottled and boxed foods.
2. Canned goods may be kept if cleaned thoroughly with soap and water or submerged in chlorinated water for 15 minutes.
3. Clothing, furniture, carpets, etc. should be discarded unless they are cleaned and disinfected.

Reminder: Wash your hands frequently before eating.



The sketches above show three examples of approved backwater valves.

How can I prevent basement flooding?

Residents can take steps to prevent or minimize the amount of standing water in basements due to a sewer back-up. It may be as simple as installing a backflow system in your home. Below are the most frequently asked questions about backflow systems and how they help prevent basement flooding.

Q What is a back-flow?

A Backflow is a condition found in plumbing systems where the contents of the storm or sanitary piping flow in a direction opposite of the intended direction into the basement.

Q What is backwater valve?

A A backwater valve is a device or valve installed in a house drain or sewer pipe where a sewer is subject to backflow. It prevents drainage or waste from backing up into a lower level or fixture and causing a flooding condition. The sketches on the left-hand side of the page show examples of common backflow valves.

Q Do I need a permit to install a backwater valve?

A Yes. Any plumbing work done requires a permit and inspection. Stop by City Hall for your permit application. Or call CDI at 447-3340.

Q Where should a backwater valve be installed?

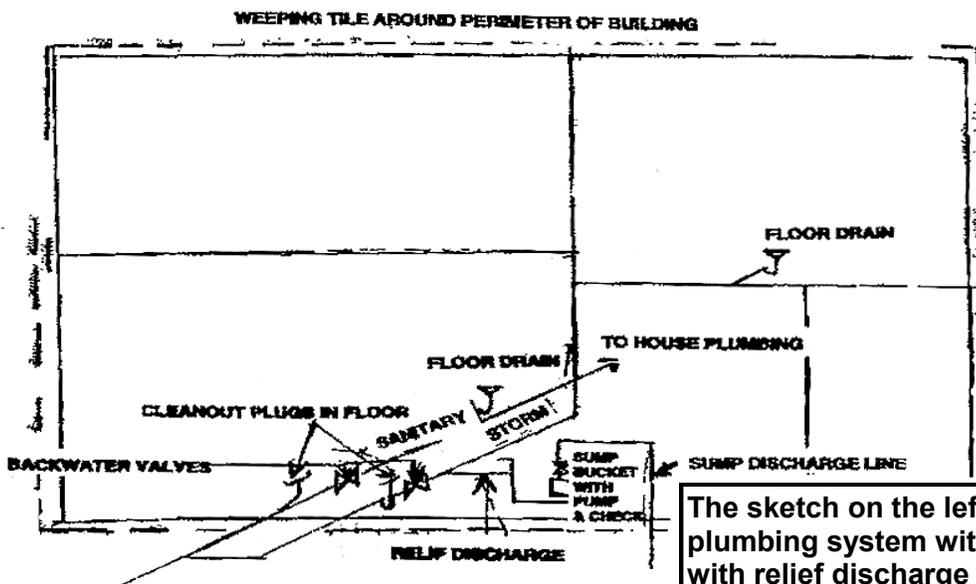
A A backwater valve must be installed so that access is provided to the working parts for any service or repair.

Q Where are backwater valves required?

A A backwater valve should be installed where the plumbing fixtures are subject to backflow from public sewers. Public sewers can become blocked or overloaded when an excessive amount of rain falls in a short period of time.

Q Are backwater valves required for storm drainage systems?

A Yes. Backwater valves are required where the subsoil drain for a structure is subject to backflow. After the installation of a backwater valve, the subsoil drains can discharge into a trapped area drain, sump, dry well or another approved location above the grade of your home.



The sketch on the left is an example of a typical plumbing system with backwater valves installed with relief discharge from the storm system to the sump pump bucket.

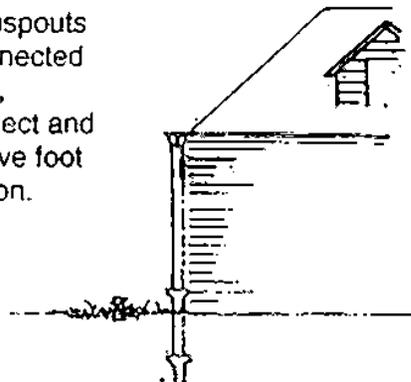
**For more info.
Mon.-Fri.
Call 445-5363
After business
hours call
777-6700**

Disconnect downspouts to ease pollution

Residents of St. Clair Shores can help cleanup Lake St. Clair and ease basement flooding as a bonus by inspecting their roof downspouts to make sure they are disconnected from underground sewers. Downspouts that funnel rainwater from roofs into sewers were cited by the South Macomb Sanitary District and environmental technicians as one of the contributing factors to pollution that have closed beaches along Lake St. Clair for the past few years.

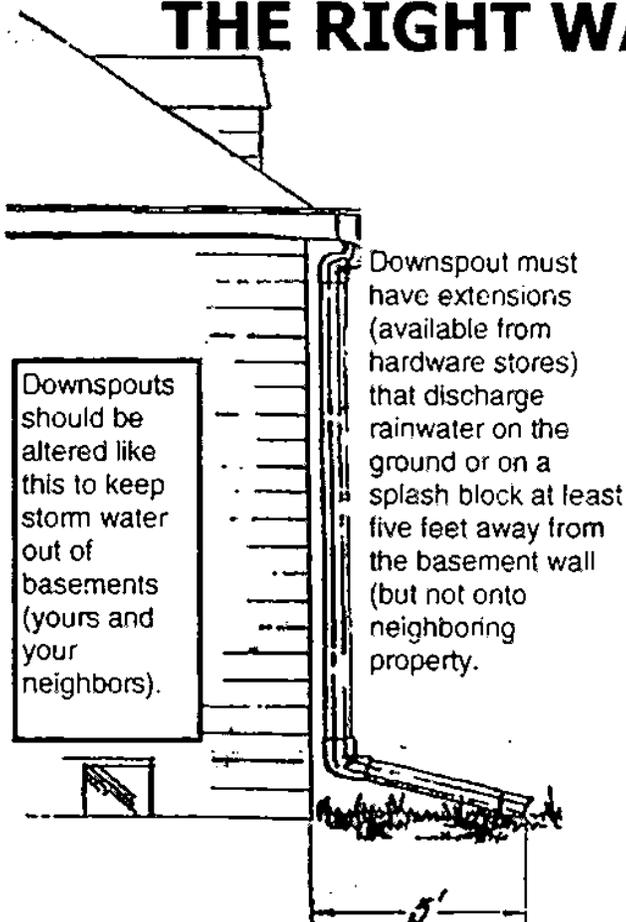
THE WRONG WAY...

If downspouts are connected like this, disconnect and add a five foot extension.



THE RIGHT WAY

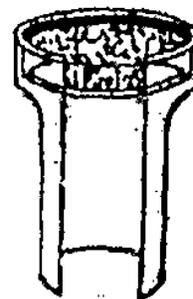
PREVENTION IS THE KEY!



Downspouts should be altered like this to keep storm water out of basements (yours and your neighbors).

Downspout must have extensions (available from hardware stores) that discharge rainwater on the ground or on a splash block at least five feet away from the basement wall (but not onto neighboring property).

Plug the underground downspout connection like this:



- A. Remove downspout underground riser to first bell.
- B. Cut a circular piece of heavy cardboard and place in base of bell.
- C. Place a ready-mix concrete or mortar and sandcap on the underground downspout

Disease prevention . . .

Q What is the greatest danger in a flood or sewage back-up?

A The greatest danger is not the risk of disease, but the risk of electrocution or explosion. **Do not** enter a flooded basement or light matches until the utility companies have shut off the gas and electric service.

Q How do people get an illness from flood water or sewage?

A People can get *fecal-oral diseases* when they get feces or stool in their mouth—often from dirty hands. Fecal-oral diseases re-spread in two ways:

1. Direct contact with flood water, sewage or

a person sick with a fecal-oral disease.

2. Indirect contact with flood water and sewage by using objects like toys and furniture or eating food that has touched flood water or sewage.

Q What can be done to prevent a fecal-oral disease?

A Prevention is the key. Follow these steps to reduce your risk...

1. Wash your hands after every contact with the flooded area, after using the toilet, and before eating.

- Wash hands under warm running water.

- Use a liquid soap.

- Lather hands for at least 20 seconds

- Dry hand with a paper

towel.

2. Follow appropriate sanitizing procedures.

- Put 8 tablespoons of laundry bleach in each gallon of water used to sanitize contaminated areas and objects.

- Discard cloth items that cannot be laundered, like stuffed animal toys or pillows.

- Open windows and use fans to ventilate the contaminated area.

- Keep pets out of the flooded area to prevent them from tracking sewage to other areas in your home.

3. Dispose of trash, including objects like toys and clothing, in leak-proof bags and label as contaminated with sewage. Large items that cannot be bagged, such as furniture or carpet, should also be labeled as contaminated with sewage. Warning labels, attached to trash that is placed at the curb for pickup, will help prevent other people from salvaging these items.

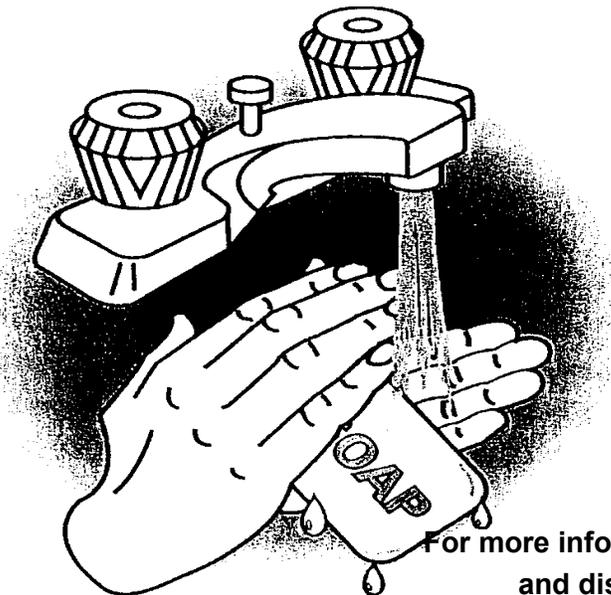
St. Clair Shores City Council

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Mayor Pro Tem

Council Members:

Peter A. Accica
Ronald J. Frederick
Peter A. Rubino
Candice B. Rusie
Chris M. Vitale



For more information on flooding, cleanup and disease prevention, visit

<https://disasterinfo.nlm.nih.gov/dimrc/floods.html>