

NOTICE TO RESIDENTS

In response to a Consent Order imposed by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, the Village of Akron is implementing a program for removal of “illegal” connections to the sanitary sewer system.

In 2003, Department of Public Works will begin inspecting the sanitary sewer system. As unauthorized and illegal connections are identified, property and building owners will be notified. Elimination of this flow from the sanitary sewer system will be required.

The Village will begin enforcing removal of “illegal” connections to the sanitary sewer system. **The Akron Code will provide penalties for the failure to comply with a notice to disconnect an illegal connection.** The Village expects there will be a high rate of voluntary compliance with this inspection program as the goal is to reduce wastewater treatment costs and improve the quality of our wastewater treatment plant discharge to Murder Creek.

Included here are answers to the questions typically asked about the program.

What is a sanitary sewer?

A sanitary sewer is a pipe located in the Village Right-of-Way that is designed solely to transport wastewater from sanitary fixtures in your house or place of business to the Village’s Wastewater Treatment Plant. Sanitary sewers in your neighborhood are owned by the Village of Akron.

What is a storm sewer?

A storm sewer is a pipe located in the Village Right-of-Way that is designed to carry storm related water runoff. Storm sewers are normally much larger than sanitary sewers because they are designed to carry much larger amounts of flow. Storm sewers are owned, operated and maintained by the Village of Akron.

What is an illegal connection?

An illegal connection is a connection that permits extraneous storm related water (water from sources other than sanitary fixtures) to enter the sanitary sewer system. The extraneous storm related water is water that should be going to the storm sewer or allowed to soak into the ground without entering the sanitary sewer.

What are the different types of illegal connections?

Illegal connections include connections of roof downspouts, sump pumps, footing/foundation drains and basement drains to the house sanitary sewer lines. In addition, defective house sanitary sewer lines cause extraneous water to enter the sanitary sewers and thus they are also illegal connections.

Where should storm drainage from downspouts, sump pump and/or other drain appurtenance be directed if it cannot be discharged to the sanitary sewer?

Modern subdivision construction standards generally call for water from sump pump, area drains and the like to be diverted to the storm sewers, front or back yards or above ground drainage ditches.

Why is it important for everyone to remove illegal connections?

Removal of illegal connections will significantly reduce the flow of extraneous storm related water in the sanitary sewer system. This storm water ends up at the wastewater treatment plant and is treated along with sanitary flow. If the Village and its residents can reduce the amount of storm water in the treatment plant, the costs of operating the plant can be significantly reduced.

How can surcharged sanitary sewers cause basement flooding?

A surcharged sewer flows at a level greater than the “normal” level. If the home has sanitary fixtures or floor drains at an elevation below the surcharge level, basement flooding can occur. The sanitary sewers have been designed to transfer sanitary waste only. Extraneous storm water flow added to the normal sanitary flow can exceed the capacity of the sanitary sewer resulting in a situation where the sanitary sewer is “surcharged”. Basically, surcharging occurs when the amount of flow trying to get through a pipe exceeds the maximum capacity of the pipe thus building up pressure in the pipe. When pressure builds up it seeks to relieve itself through any means possible, one of which is by backing up private sanitary services and filling basements and crawlspaces. Reducing the extraneous flow will reduce the surcharging and sewer back-ups.

Do illegal connections really contribute large amounts of extraneous water to the sanitary sewer system?

Yes. For example, a typical eight-inch sanitary sewer can handle domestic sewage from up to 225 homes; however, it takes only five sump pumps operating at full capacity to overload an eight-inch sanitary sewer.

How does the Village of Akron identify illegal connections?

The Village owns sewer-televising equipment, conducts smoke and dye testing of the sewers and house lines and makes house inspections.

The following are possible solutions:

The sump pipe could be run overland to a ditch or swale, which drains to another location. Also, a long flexible tube that can be moved around the yard to avoid discharge in only one portion of the yard could be used.

The sump pump can be run underground through a 4” or 6” diameter perforated PVC pipe, with holes at the bottom and backfilled with washed gravel. An overflow tube should be placed at the opposite end to allow the water to escape in the event that the volume of the pipe is exceeded. This pipe tube is located at a convenient area of the yard such as a garden. Another option could be to run it to a drywell.

Route the sump pump to a Village storm via a 4” or 6” pipe with a curb relief “bubbler” and tie into the back of an inlet or the crown of the mainline pipe by way of a core hole. No breaking out of the concrete pipe is allowed. All taps are to be made by a qualified licensed contractor. A permit will be required with proper inspections made by the Department of Public Works.

Note – Caution must always be taken to prevent freezing in pipes. This could be done by placing a tee where the pipe exits the building. One branch could go underground and the other could be capped off or valved to pump into the yard during the winter. Another option is to have the 2” diameter sump pump tie into the larger 4” or 6” pipe at the house allowing for expansion and overflow. Pipes flowing overland should be kept no farther than 10 feet from the house in winter to avoid icy sidewalks.

I’ve never had basement flooding due to surcharge sewer. Why should I remove my illegal connections?

You may not have basement flooding due to surcharged sewers. But if your plumbing pumps or drains storm related water into the sanitary sewer, it may well be the cause of flooding in your neighbor’s basement.

Is the requirement to remove illegal connections unique to Akron?

No. In response to New York State Department of Environmental Conservation regulations, local governments have adopted ordinances or codes prohibiting the intrusion of extraneous storm related water into sanitary sewers.

Your help in eliminating unauthorized connections is needed. If you have any questions, or would like to review your connection, see our website (www.erie.gov/akron) for codes and sewer use laws or call the Village of Akron Public Works Department at (716) 542-2680 Monday – Friday between 8:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M.