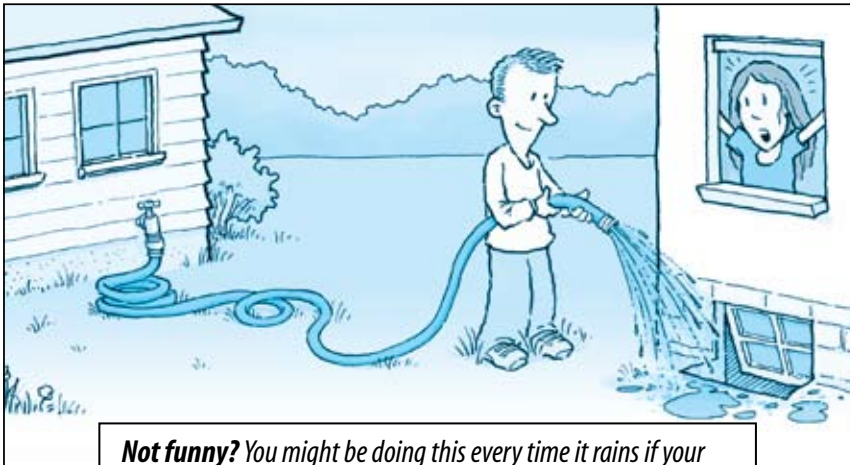




## Footing drain disconnection: Benefits for you and for our community



**Not funny?** You might be doing this every time it rains if your home has footing drains connected to the sanitary sewer system.

During periods of heavy rainfall, footing drains buried around the foundation of most homes drain water away from the home. Until 1981, it was customary to route that rainwater to the sanitary sewer system. These flows were found to be the major cause of basement backup problems during heavy rain storms.

In addition, this excess groundwater places a strain on wastewater treatment that can result in untreated overflows to the Huron River, an environmental hazard and a regulatory violation.

In 2001, the City of Ann Arbor passed an ordinance establishing a program and funding for disconnecting residential and commercial footing drains from the city sanitary sewer system.

Since 2001, more than 1500 Ann Arbor homes and businesses have had footing drains disconnected from the sanitary sewer system via this city funded effort.

### Footing drain disconnection offers...

**Greater protection of health and property:** The neighborhoods that had the biggest risk of basement backups now have significantly higher level of protection.

**Greater protection of the Huron River:** The risk of overflow of untreated wastewater to the river has been significantly reduced.

**Increased efficiency and reduced costs:** Decreased demand on the Waste Water Treatment Plant saves money daily for Ann Arbor customers.

For more information on the Footing Drain Disconnection (FDD) Project, visit [www.a2fdd.com](http://www.a2fdd.com) or call 734.213.5444.

## Consumer's Guide to Tap Water

**Make every drop count.** City staff assembled responses to several frequently-asked questions about tap water quality and quantity. The following questions are answered online at [www.a2gov.org/A2H2O](http://www.a2gov.org/A2H2O). If an online link is not convenient, please call the Customer Service Center during weekday business hours at 734.794.6333.

1. How can I evaluate my Ann Arbor water bill? How do I access my personal online water usage report? How do I interpret the information, especially for periods with much higher water usage? How can I look for leaks or other reasons for a water usage spike?
2. My water from the tap appears cloudy straight but becomes clear after sitting in a glass for a few minutes. Why?
3. My water from the tap appears discolored (reddish, other color).
4. I am noticing a change in my water pressure at the tap—lower or higher.
5. I am noticing a taste or odor in my tap water.
6. I am looking for ways to conserve water and reduce my bill.
7. What is backflow protection and how does it affect me?
8. I have other tap water questions not addressed above.

To further assist customers with saving water, a small Home Water Audit Kit is available from the city. The kit includes a faucet flow measurement bag and booklet with water conservation tips and steps to find and fix leaks. Pick up a kit for \$2 from the Customer Service and Payment Center, open weekdays during business hours at 220 E. Huron.

# No Phosphorus fertilizer needed for healthy lawns and river

Since January 2007, city residents have stopped using lawn fertilizers that contain phosphorus. Local home and garden stores are well stocked with river-safe fertilizers (make sure the middle number on the bag is 0). According to river tests by the University of Michigan, the amount of phosphorus detected at several test sites in the Huron has dropped an average of 17-28 percent over two years. Stopping the unnecessary use of phosphorus in fertilizers protects the river and helps us meet a federal mandate to reduce phosphorus in the Huron River by 50 percent. There is plenty of phosphorus in our soils. When the soil can't hold any more phosphorus, it washes off with the rainwater and flows into storm drains and creeks that run to the river. Once in the river, phosphorus encourages the overgrowth of algae. Too much algae blocks out sun and oxygen; kills healthy water plants, insects, and fish; and lowers the water quality for wildlife, recreation, and drinking water treatment.

Ann Arbor's phosphorus ordinance only applies to lawn fertilizers. Garden and tree fertilizers may contain phosphorus, as may lawn fertilizers where soil tests within the last three years indicate that phosphorus is needed. For more information, please check the city's Web site at [www.a2gov.org/green](http://www.a2gov.org/green) or contact the Environmental Coordinator at [mnaud@a2gov.org](mailto:mnaud@a2gov.org).



## Good to Know...

- **Ann Arbor Parks & Recreation registration is available online at [www.a2gov.org/parks](http://www.a2gov.org/parks)** as well as at all A2 Parks & Recreation facilities, City Hall, and the downtown district library.
- **The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Mayor's Green Fair** will be held on Friday, June 11, from 6 to 9 p.m. on Main Street. Details at [www.a2gov.org/green](http://www.a2gov.org/green).
- **An expanded single-stream recycling program will begin this summer** as new, free recycling carts are delivered to residents and businesses over eight weeks in July-August 2010. Once you get your new recycling cart, just follow the instructions on the imprinted lid decal. At that time the city will collect more items to recycle, including **plastic bottles and tubs** marked #1 through 7, except #3 (PVC) and Styrofoam™. More information on this exciting direction is posted online at [www.a2gov.org/recycle](http://www.a2gov.org/recycle) and will appear in the spring *WasteWatcher* newsletter.

## Stormwater rate-reduction credits available

You can lower your stormwater bill by taking steps to protect stormwater quality and reduce the amount of water draining from your property. You can learn more and apply on-line at [www.a2gov.org/storm](http://www.a2gov.org/storm) or call the Customer Service line at 734.794.6333.

- Make your home a **RiverSafe Home** partner through Washtenaw County and save \$1.26/quarter. Fill in the online survey or phone 734.222.6860. There is no cost to enroll.
- Install **rain barrels** on your downspouts and save \$1.82/quarter (total, for one or more rain barrels).
- Create a **rain garden, cistern, or drywell** (limited to one of these per property) and save \$2.85/quarter.

If you have nonresidential property, commercial properties, or residential apartment units larger than two units, your location may qualify for additional credits, as described online or by phone.

When you receive your 2010 Census form in the mail this March, please be sure to fill it out and send it in. Census data helps determine how much federal funding Ann Arbor receives and guides local planning decisions, including where to provide social services and build new roads. Census data also is used to reapportion congressional seats to states and assure proper district representation. See the 2010 Census link under "living in" on the city's Web site: [www.a2gov.org](http://www.a2gov.org).