

YOUR BASEMENT

TIPS TO KEEP IT DRY

Spring brings frequent and heavy rainstorms. During a rainstorm, the pressure on your home drainage systems increases dramatically. Reasons for basement flooding include: cracks in basement foundation, poor grading, sump pump failure, blocked or broken pipes, backup of wastewater, and obstructed connection between home and main sewer.



OUTSIDE

SEWERS

Spring is a good time to have your sewer lead inspected. During periods of prolonged, heavy rainfall, a clogged sewer lead or failed footing drain can lead to sewage or stormwater entering the basement.

GUTTERS AND DOWNSPOUTS

The goal is to drain stormwater at least three feet away, so if necessary, run extensions or troughs from your downspouts.

- Clean leaves and debris from inside the gutters and downspouts.
- Tighten elbows and other connections.
- Caulk and seal any leaks.
- Repair or replace sagging, badly dented or cracked sections.



LOT GRADING

Make sure that your property is sloped so that water runs away from your house, not toward it. If a walkway, staircase, patio or pool deck slopes toward your house, those features are likely contributing hundreds of gallons of water to the problem and potentially overwhelming your sump pump.

- Check the slope from the basement wall. A well-draining property slopes gently away from the house, descending six inches over the initial ten feet surrounding the foundation (with another 12 inches of slope over the next 100 feet.)
- Check for settling, particularly under stairs and decks. If your home has exterior stairs to the basement, keep the steps free of debris and make sure the drain at the bottom of the stairs is unclogged.
- Raise any low spots around your house.
- Look for cracks or spaces on driveways, sidewalks and patios that are next to the foundation walls. Caulk or waterproof where needed.

FOUNDATION WALLS

- Keep landscaping at least 12 inches away from basement walls. Roots - even from small plants - can direct stormwater to your basement.
- If you have below-grade basement windows, check for cracks in your windows and gaps around the frame. Consider installing window well covers that will fasten securely to your home's foundation. Clear acrylic covers allow light to enter, even as they keep out rain, leaves, and pests.



INSIDE



BASEMENT WALLS

Inspect your basement's walls and floors. Use epoxy to fill any foundation cracks and if you detect warning signs, apply masonry sealer indoors.

SUMP PUMP

If you have a sump pump, check to make sure its pit or basin is free of debris.

- Check for power.
- Test the pump by pouring water into the pump basin.
- Check and repair any leaks in the discharge pipe.

BACKUP PUMP OR GENERATOR

Consider purchasing a battery or water-powered backup pump and test it annually. If you live in an area plagued with frequent storms and power outages, a generator may be a long-term investment worth considering.

WHOLE HOUSE CHECK VALVE (OPTIONAL)

- Open the top and clean out any debris.
- Check the flapper. Make sure it is moving freely.



www.A2gov.org/sumppumps



City of Ann Arbor
301 E. Huron Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48104