

## Frequently Asked Questions

*Are there other options for downspouts that cannot be re-directed to simple surface systems?*

**YES.** Downspouts can sometimes be relocated to a more appropriate drainage location. We can help you determine if this would be a reasonable option for your property. Roof runoff can also be directed to an underground dry well which allows the water to soak into the soil. This system can be installed in places where downspout extensions are not appropriate because of space requirements or drainage concerns.

*Can I get around obstacles and slope problems using basic downspout material?*

**YES.** Be creative. You can use a combination of elbows and extensions to help route water away from property lines, trees, shrubs, and pathways to a safe location.

*Is there a downspout extension that can be moved out of the way when I mow my lawn?*

**YES.** Consider installing a gutter-grade elbow and an extension that has been hinged together so that it can be flipped up against the house when you need access during dry weather. Or, you can install a corrugated polyethylene hose that can be attached to the end of the downspout. These products can be found in some hardware and home improvement stores. We recommend you call first to make sure the item is in stock.

*Do I have to seal the combined sewer standpipe?*

**YES.** The standpipe must be sealed to prevent things from getting in or out of the sewer pipe. In most cases, you should be able to use a wing-nut test plug. You can also use a simple rubber cap secured by a hose clamp or you can seal the standpipe with a watertight cement seal.

*Can I use a rain barrel, pond, or drainage swale to redirect storm water runoff?*

**YES.** Downspout disconnection can be a great source of water for your landscape. Rain barrels are simple to install. Other methods include drainage swales, recirculating streams, pools, or ponds.

*I already disconnected my downspouts from the city sewer system, but they run to an underground discharge system (rain garden, drainage swale, flower bed, etc.). City inspectors may think they are still connected to the city sewer. What should I do?*

Call the Downspout Disconnection program office to explain your downspout system so that when your area is surveyed the inspectors will understand how your system works.

*I can't afford to pay someone to disconnect my downspouts. Does the city have a program to help those residents with low incomes?*

**YES.** The city received a limited grant to help low income residents cover some of the costs associated with downspout disconnection. The total amount allowed per household is \$60, or \$20 per downspout for a maximum of three downspouts. Residents interested in this limited program will need to complete an application and provide proof of income. Funding for this program is limited to the first 650 applicants. Contact the Downspout Disconnection program office to learn more.

*What are Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs)?*

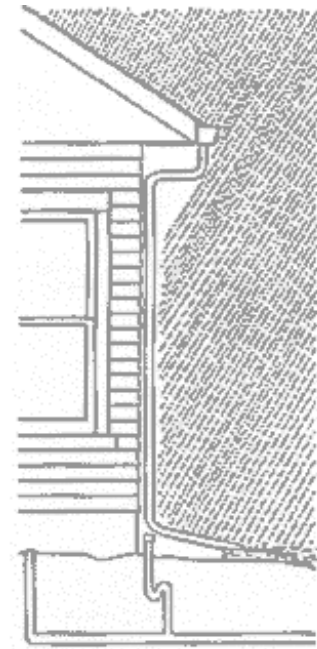
Like many other cities, Dearborn has a sewer system that combines sanitary sewage from homes and businesses, with stormwater run-off from rooftops and streets. During heavy rainfall, the amount of water coming into the sewer system can exceed the capacity of the pipes and Combined Sewer Overflows (CSO's) are discharged into the Rouge River. By reducing the amount of stormwater that enters the combined system, less sewage will be discharged into the river, which helps the environment.

**City of Dearborn  
Department of Public Works  
Downspout Disconnection  
Program Information  
— 943-2308 —**

Printing cost partially funded by a grant from  
The Wayne County-Rouge Program office.

# City of Dearborn

## Downspout Disconnection Program



*An information and  
"how to" guide for  
Dearborn residents*

Pursuant to the requirements of State law [MCL 324.3112(b)], and Dearborn City Ordinance, [Sec. 19-166 through 19-168] eaves troughs, roof downspouts, or any rainwater roof collection system may not be directly connected to the sewer system. The problem with such connections is that they are a significant factor in the overburdening of private sewer systems, which can lead to basement flooding, increased pollution and environmental problems.

According to state law, residents and businesses are required to disconnect downspouts from the City's sewer system and properly seal the connections to the sewer standpipes. Failure to do so can result in the imposition of a fine, as required by city ordinance.

Disconnecting a downspout from the sewer system is usually not very complex or costly. A permit is not required to perform the work, unless the connections are more complicated in nature.

The City of Dearborn will be surveying homes during the Spring of 2003 and will be contacting residents afterward regarding this requirement. As you disconnect your downspouts, please make sure that you do not send downspout flows on to a neighbors' property. When you have disconnected your downspouts and sealed your sewer standpipes you can call our office at 313-943-2308 for a compliance inspection.

## How?

*All you need are a few supplies:*

- 1) hacksaw
- 2) tape measure
- 3) hammer
- 4) screw driver
- 5) pliers
- 6) sheet metal screws
- 7) downspout elbow
- 8) downspout extension
- 9) splash block
- 10) rubber cap



### STEP 1

Measure approximately 9" from where the downspout enters the sewer connection.



### STEP 2

Cut the downspout with a hacksaw.



### STEP 3

Cap the sewer standpipe. This prevents water from going in. In most cases, you should be able to use a simple rubber cap secured by a hose clamp. You can also use a wing-nut test plug if available cap sizes don't fit. A watertight cement seal/cap is also an option.



### STEP 4

Insert the downspout INTO the elbow (if you put the elbow into the downspout, it will leak). You may need to crimp the end of the downspout with a pair of pliers to get a good fit.



### STEP 5

Attach a downspout pipe extension to carry water away from the house and foundation. You can use a hacksaw to cut the extension to the desired length. Be sure to insert the elbow into the extension to prevent leaks. Secure the elbow and extension with sheet metal screws. To prevent erosion where the water drains, you can place a splash block at the end of the downspout extension.

