

NOTICE TO WASTEWATER CUSTOMERS

In 2015, the Municipality of Middlesex Centre's Public Works and Engineering Department began inspecting the sanitary sewer system. The Municipality has since implemented a program to enforce the removal of "illegal" connections to the sanitary sewer system. As suspected unauthorized and illegal connections are identified, property and building owners will be notified, and elimination of this flow to the sanitary sewer system will be required.

The Municipality will begin enforcing through legal action the removal of "illegal" connections found to be permitting stormwater into the sanitary sewer system. **The Municipality's applicable by-law, Wastewater and Stormwater Discharge By-law, 2017-060, details penalties for the failure to comply with a notice to disconnect an illegal connection.** The Municipality 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 facility discharges to the environment.

In order to protect your property from a sewer back up, we strongly recommend that you consider installing a backwater valve within your house/building's sanitary drainage plumbing. Backwater valves are generally installed in the basement of a building and are now mandatory on all new homes in serviced areas of the Municipality.

We would be happy to visit your home to discuss how you can protect your basement, or if you'd like us to assist you in determining if you are unknowingly discharging stormwater into the sanitary sewers. For more information regarding backwater valves, you may contact Arnie Marsman – Director, Planning & Development Services, Chief Building Official at (519) 666-0190.

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 Municipality's Right-of-Way or easement that is designed solely to transport wastewater from sanitary fixtures in your house or place of business to the Municipality's Wastewater Treatment Facility.

What is a storm sewer?

A storm sewer is a pipe located in the Municipality's Right-of-Way or easement 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.

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 into the sanitary sewer system. This stormwater ends up at the wastewater treatment facility and is treated along with sanitary flow. If the

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Municipality of Middlesex Centre and its residents can reduce the amount of stormwater in the treatment facility, the costs of operating the facility and sewer backups into basements 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 stormwater 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.

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

Yes. For example, a typical 800mm (eight-inch) diameter sanitary sewer can handle domestic sewage from up to 225 homes; however, it takes only five sump pumps operating at full capacity to overload the same sanitary sewer.

How does the Municipality of Middlesex Centre identify illegal connections?

The Municipality retains third-party contracted sewer-televising equipment, conducts smoke and dye testing of the sewers and house lines and makes house inspections.

What are some 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 Municipal storm sewer (if available) 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. All sewer taps are to be made by a qualified licensed contractor. A permit will be required with proper inspections made by the Municipality of Middlesex Centre.

Note – Pipes flowing overland should be kept no farther than 10 feet from the house and terminated at the property line 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 neighbour’s basement. By eliminating illegal connections thereby reducing storm related flows to the sanitary sewers, this will help reduce treatment costs and ultimately wastewater rates.

Is the requirement to remove illegal connections unique to the Municipality of Middlesex Centre?

No. In response to Provincial 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, please visit the Municipality’s website (www.middlesexcentre.on.ca) for codes and the sewer use by-law (Wastewater and Stormwater Discharge By-law, 2017-060) or call the Municipality of Middlesex Centre’s Public Works and Engineering Department at (519) 666-0190 Monday – Friday between 8:30 A.M. and 4:30 P.M.