



Managing Your Storm Water: Disconnecting Your Downspout

Downspout Disconnection Program

Every time Columbia City experiences heavy rains or a significant snow melt, the City's sewer system is put to the test. As downspouts and road gutters flood the sewer with water, overflow is routed into the Blue River or Phillips Ditch. These combined sewer overflows (CSOs) contaminate our waterways with raw sewage and threaten both human health and aquatic life. That is why the disconnection of all downspouts from Columbia City's sewer system is encouraged. Downspouts on your house that go directly into a pipe at ground level are contributing to the problem because the pipe likely is connected to a combined sewer line.

These downspouts should be re-routed to your lawn to prevent the water from entering the sewer system. If you prefer, you can also route the downspout through your rain barrel. If you don't have a rain barrel, but want one, check out the City's rain barrel rebate program at

www.columbiacity.net/community/stormwater-2/

A downspout disconnection can cost as much as \$100 but is now being offered

Free of charge through Columbia City's Storm Water Utility.



Contact City Hall at 248-5100 to schedule your free disconnection



Managing Your Storm Water: Disconnecting Your Downspout

Columbia City Downspout Disconnection Program

Combined sewer overflows (CSOs) occur when the volume of rainwater or snow melt entering the City's combined sewer system causes the combination of sanitary sewage and storm water to exceed the capacity of the pipes that carry the sewage and storm water to the wastewater treatment plant. The excess mixture of raw sewage and storm water is discharged directly into the Blue River or Phillips Ditch causing harmful water pollution. In 2015, the City discharged more than 9.3 million gallons of combined sewage and storm water into the Blue River and Phillips Ditch.

Downspouts on your house that go directly into a pipe at ground level may be contributing to this pollution because the pipe may be connected to a combined sewer. In an effort to reduce the amount of storm water that enters Columbia City's combined sewer system when it rains, the City offers a free downspout disconnection program.

By disconnecting your downspouts from the sewer, the amount of storm water that enters the combined sewer system is reduced. Part of the water from your disconnected downspouts will infiltrate into the ground and never enter the combined sewers. The storm water that does run off your lawn and enter the sewer system will do so more slowly than storm water from a direct connection. The reduction in storm water volume and the delayed entry of storm water into the sewer system will reduce the number of combined sewer overflows.

Why Should I Disconnect

Columbia City is required by Federal and State regulations to implement a long-term control plan to eliminate combined sewer overflows. Implementation of the plan required the construction of additional wastewater treatment infrastructure. This resulted in increases in the monthly rates charged to City utility customers for wastewater services. Disconnecting your downspouts will help the City eliminate combined sewer overflows and reduce future costs of constructing, operating and maintaining wastewater infrastructure.

Downspouts that connect to pipes at ground level may tie-in to the foundation drain of your home. If the drain is connected to a sump pump in your basement or crawlspace, a heavy rain will discharge several hundred gallons of storm water from your roof to your sump pump. By disconnecting your downspouts, you will save wear and tear on your sump pump and reduce the risk of flooding your basement or crawlspace during a heavy rain.

Am I Required to Disconnect

In addition to providing many benefits to the community, disconnection of downspouts and sump pumps is required by the City of Columbia City under certain circumstances. Chapter 51.09 of the City ordinances states, "No person shall discharge, or cause to be discharged, any storm water, surface water, ground water, roof runoff, subsurface drainage, cooling water or unpolluted industrial process waters in to a sanitary sewer". A sanitary sewer *does not* have any storm water connection points. A combined sewer *has both* sewage and storm water connection points. Generally, the prohibition applies to connections installed after June 11, 2013.



Managing Your Storm Water: Disconnecting Your Downspout

Learn More

Additional information is available by visiting Columbia City's storm water management webpage at www.columbiacity.net/community/stormwater-2/ or by contacting the City's MS4 (municipal separate storm sewer) coordinator at (260) 248-5118. Information on the website includes detailed downspout disconnection instructions, a copy of the downspout disconnection program hold harmless & indemnification agreement, and general information about the program.

Please help us to keep our water clean, protect our homes and reduce our utility costs.

Thank You.



Managing Your Storm Water: Disconnecting Your Downspout

City of Columbia City Downspout Disconnection Program Hold Harmless & Indemnification Agreement

Some older homes have downspouts that drain rainwater from gutters into pipes in the ground that are connected to combined sewers. During heavy rain events, these combined sewers produce overflows, called CSOs. To help protect the environment and local waterways, the City of Columbia City offers a free program to disconnect these downspouts, cap the pipes, and add an extension to the downspout so the water drains into your yard instead of the combined sewers. Please complete this *Hold Harmless and Indemnification Agreement* and return it to the Storm Water Utility to receive your free downspout disconnection.

1. I, the undersigned, am the owner of the property described below.
2. I understand that my downspouts are being disconnected in accordance with Municipal Code of the City of Columbia City, Title V, Chapter 51, Section 51.09 *Discharge of Storm Water*.
3. By signing this waiver, I authorize the disconnection of my downspout(s) by City of Columbia City employees or their agents.
4. I understand the City of Columbia City employees or their agents cannot be held liable for any and all damages resulting from the disconnection of downspouts.
5. Once a downspout is disconnected, it will be my responsibility to ensure that the replacement facility, which will be my personal property, is not removed and remains properly maintained and operated.
6. I, the undersigned, hereby indemnify and hold harmless the City of Columbia City for any and all damages resulting from the City's disconnection of downspouts.

Date: _____

Homeowner signature: _____

Printed Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Address: _____

Return the completed form to:
Storm Water Utility
City Hall
112 S. Chauncey St.
Columbia City, IN 46725
Email: info@columbiacity.net