



Downspout Disconnection Program

Everytime 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, so it does not exceed wastewater treatment capacity. These combined sewer overflows (CSOs) contaminate our waterways with raw sewage and threaten the health of both human 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 the sanitary sewer line.

These downspouts should be re-routed to your lawn to prevent the water from entering the sewer system. If you prefer, we 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/stormwater1. 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.



Storm Water Management Practices: Disconnecting Your Downspout

Columbia City Downspout Disconnection Program

In an effort to reduce the amount of storm water that enters Columbia City's sewer system when it rains, the city is introducing a downspout disconnection program. Rainwater that enters the city's combined sewer system takes up valuable capacity in the sewer lines. When storm water rapidly enters the combined sewers the system can become overloaded, resulting in the discharge of combined sewage to the Blue River and/or Phillips Ditch. Excessive amounts of storm water entering the city sewer system can also result in flooding of streets and homes.

Why Should I Disconnect

Combined sewer overflows discharge when the volume of rainwater or snow melt entering the combined sewer system causes the combination of sanitary sewage and rainwater in the system to exceed the capacity of the pipes that carry waste to the wastewater treatment plant.

The locations in the combined sewer system designed to relieve this excess capacity are CSO discharge points. Columbia City currently has ten (10) CSO locations. When we experience significant rain events, combined sanitary sewage and rainwater is discharged to the receiving waters at these locations. Columbia City has already made system improvements and upgrades in excess of twenty-five million dollars to eliminate CSO's. We anticipate another eight to ten million dollars to be spent over the next decade. This impacts sewer rates for everyone, but you can help us!

By eliminating as many sources of inflow as possible, you are helping to protect the water quality of the Blue River and Phillips Ditch. It also protects your family and property from possible sewer backups and overflows. The reduction of storm water to the sewer collection system also results in decreased maintenance and operational cost for the City.

By disconnecting downspouts and sump pumps from the sewer, the amount of storm water that enters the sewer system is reduced. Part of the water from these disconnections will infiltrate into the ground and never enter the sewer system. The water that does run off the lawns and enters the sewer system will do so much slower than water from a direct connection. The reduction in storm water volume combined with the delayed entry of storm water into the sewer system assist in reducing the number of times the sewer system becomes overloaded.

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 ordinance 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 line *does not* have any storm water connection points. A combined sewer line *has both* sewage and storm water connection points. The ordinance is currently under review to also include the prohibition of storm water connections into a combined sewer.



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Learn More

Additional information is available by visiting Columbia City's website at www.columbiacity.net or by contacting the city's storm water manager at 260.248.5135.

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 waterways clean, protect our homes and reduce cost.

Thank You.



Storm Water Management Practices: 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 the ground, which are connected to combined sewers. On 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 annual program to disconnect these downspouts, cap the drain opening, and add an extension to the downspout so the water drains into your yard instead of the combined sewer collection system. Please complete this *Hold Harmless and Indemnification Agreement* 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 form to:
Storm Water Utility
City Hall
112S. Chauncey St.
Columbia City, IN 46725
Email: info@columbiacity.net