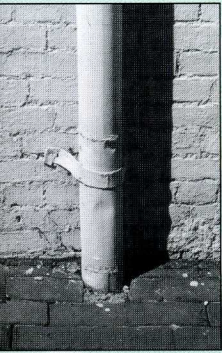


Connected downspouts — what are they?



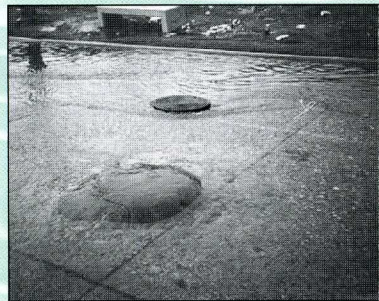
Many older homes, especially in cities, have gutters connected directly to the sanitary sewer. This means that rain from the roof runs directly into the sewer. Not all downspouts that look like this picture are connected to the sanitary sewer; some may empty into a storm drain.

Call your local sewer system authority or public works department to find

out if your connected downspout empties into the sanitary sewer.

Why is this a problem?

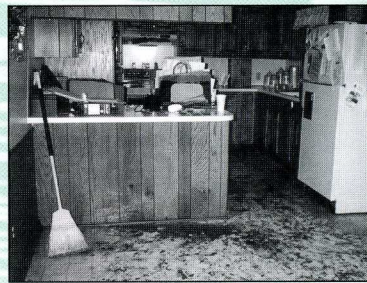
The problem is too much water. Sanitary sewer systems can only handle a certain amount of water. During a rainstorm, water gets into the sewer from connected downspouts and other sources. When there is too much water for the system, the excess has to go somewhere, and that somewhere is often somebody's basement, a manhole, or a nearby creek or river. Municipalities have a legal requirement to stop water from overflowing out of sewers. Even if the water does not overflow, it's still a problem, because the wastewater treatment plant has to treat the extra water.



Why should you care?

Sewage backups and overflows are messy, costly, and a threat to health and the environment.

Cleaning house. When there is a sewer backup into a house, the homeowner may have to pay the cost



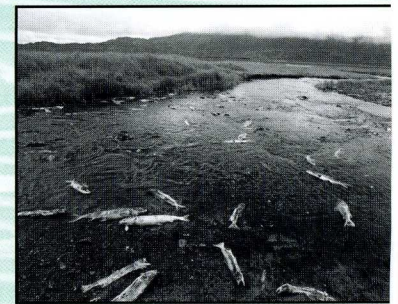
to clean up, repair damage, and replace ruined carpets and furniture. Basic homeowner's insurance often does not cover

this damage (unless the policy has an added clause or "rider").

Health. Raw sewage contains microorganisms that can cause diseases such as hepatitis, giardiasis, and gastroenteritis.

Long term environmental damage.

Raw sewage in streams and lakes can cause illnesses in fish, kill aquatic life, and make the water unusable for swimming, fishing, and as a drinking water source.



Higher costs mean higher utility rates. The utility ends up treating the extra water, and may even have to increase the size of the treatment plant. The utility may also have to pay fines when raw sewage is released to the environment. Increased utility costs are passed along to consumers as rate increases.

What can you do?

You should check to see whether disconnecting your home's downspouts can help solve the problem. Disconnection is usually a simple, relatively inexpensive process. The steps are shown on the inside of this brochure. Your local sewer system authority or public works department should be able to tell whether your downspouts are connected to the sanitary sewer and, if so, whether disconnection makes sense.

You can also let other people know why downspouts need to be disconnected and how sewer overflows cost the entire community.

