

Dear Residents:

Large rain events sometime result in water coming up from drains in basements.

Many residents offer ideas and theories, however the only way to know why the sanitary sewer filled up during the rain event is to check where the extra water originates. Typical sources include downspouts, sump pumps, perimeter (footer) tile, and sewer clean outs in yards with cracked or missing caps.

Some may not be familiar with the sewer system and how it works. In most areas there are two sewer systems, large pipes in the ground that carry water. One is called the sanitary sewer and is designed to carry waste water from your home, including toilets, sinks, dishwashers, showers and bathtubs, etc. to the local wastewater treatment plant. The other sewer is called a storm sewer and is designed to carry rain water away from your neighborhood.

The sanitary sewer flow should stay fairly steady, increasing some during the times of day when residents shower, cook, etc. and more water goes down the home drains. However, when it rains, and the sanitary sewer rises dramatically, it indicates rain water is getting into the sanitary through improper connections. When that sanitary flow increases to the point where there is no room anymore, it will rise into the pipes that drain waste water from your home to the sanitary sewer (called the "sewer lateral"). Usually the lowest drains in the home will see waste water rising first, typically your basement.

Installing a backflow preventer may help prevent sewer water from entering your basement, but remember if nothing can come in, then

nothing can go out, at least until the water level in the sanitary sewer goes down. Flushing toilets, running a washing machine, all this water will end up on your basement floor. Also, as your lateral pipe is blocked, the next house on the sewer system that is next lowest will now get the sewer water that you had before.

If you are one who is on the receiving end of water rising in your basement drains, contact the Public Works Department at 419.448.5430; if after hours you may contact the Superintendent of Wastewater and Sewers at 567.207.6427 or Assistant Superintendent of the Water Pollution Control Center at 567.207.6426.