

# EVERY DOWNSPOUT COUNTS

COMMUNITY NEWS FROM THE CITY OF MARKHAM

## SANITARY SYSTEM DOWNSPOUT DISCONNECTION PROGRAM

### DOES THIS AFFECT ME?

If your roof downspout is directed into the ground, **please read this important news.**

#### What is the problem and what needs to be done?

Sanitary sewer systems are not designed to carry rainwater and can become overwhelmed when severe rain events occur. On March 19, 2013, Markham Council approved a Citywide Sanitary System Downspout Disconnection Program. The program will be carried out in phases and the objective of the program is to identify and disconnect the downspouts connected to the sanitary sewer system to help reduce the risk of basement flooding and help the environment. Homeowners that need to make these changes are eligible for financial assistance.



- Some homes have downspouts improperly connected to the sanitary sewer system that need to be disconnected.
- Preventing rooftop rainwater from entering the sanitary sewer can help reduce the risk of basement flooding.
- Compliance with City of Markham Sewer By-law #2014-71, which prohibits discharge of storm water and roof runoff into the sanitary sewers.

#### What are the benefits of disconnecting roof downspouts?

- Helps reduce sanitary sewer overflow during rain events
- Helps prevent basement flooding
- Helps reduce energy and cost of municipal water system and treatment plants
- Helps to improve the water quality of lakes, rivers and streams
- Helps replenish and protect ground water

## What is the City doing to identify where roof downspouts are connected to the sanitary sewer system?

1. Preliminary property investigations will be performed to identify where downspouts are discharging their water and to record basic lot grading information.
2. Based on the property investigation results, sanitary and storm sewer smoke testing will be performed to verify whether the downspouts that go into the ground are connected to the sanitary or storm sewer system.
3. Homeowners will be notified 3 - 4 days before any of the investigation and testing work begins.
4. Based on the results of the testing, a Notice of Disconnection will be sent to those of you who have downspouts connected to the sanitary sewer system.

## How is the testing done?

**Smoke testing** is used as a safe and effective technique to identify connections to the sanitary sewer system. Smoke testing involves adding a non-toxic, highly visible smoke into the sewer system and observing the exit points.

## Is there a possibility of the smoke entering my home?

**Yes.** There is a possibility of smoke entering your home if your floor drain and basin "P" traps are dry. Simply pour some water down your floor drain or unused basins prior to testing. This is also recommended every few months to prevent sewer gases from entering your home. If smoke enters your home after following these steps, you should have a plumber come and inspect your home to check for deficiencies. Please note that the City will notify residents 3 - 4 days before testing.

## Is the smoke harmful?

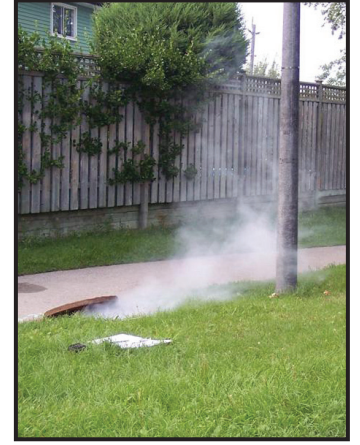
**NO.** The smoke is not harmful to your health, pets or your home furnishings and disappears in a few minutes.

## CONTACT US

If you have questions about this program, or the investigation and testing, contact us: [customerservice@markham.ca](mailto:customerservice@markham.ca) or 905-475-4862



Smoke exiting a downspout



Smoke exiting a sewer manhole

Markham information in many languages

**905-477-5530**

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