

Spring Cleaning Checklist

Every summer we experience a few thunderstorms that cause localized flooding and in a particularly severe storm – basement flooding. There are a few things every homeowner should do in the spring to ensure that your home and yard are prepared for summer storms, and to reduce the risk of basement flooding.

Eavestroughs, Downspouts and Leaders

- ❑ Eavestroughs and downspouts should be clear of leaves and branches
- ❑ Every downspout should have a leader directing water at least 2 metres away from the foundation
- ❑ The leader should direct water to a permeable surface such as a garden or lawn
- ❑ Do not direct your roof water to a neighbour or directly to the street or lane

Basement Windows, Window Wells and the Foundation

- ❑ Windows and window wells should be clear of leaves and branches
- ❑ Soil around your foundation and window wells should be sloped away from the house for at least 2-3 metres, with a recommended drop of at least 10-20cm
- ❑ Over time, the soil around most homes will settle and cause flat spots or depressions, or worse – slope towards the house – if this occurs, build up the soil near the foundation to ensure adequate drainage away from your house
- ❑ Examine the foundation of your house for cracks – caulk or fill any cracks you find

Lot Grading

- ❑ Your entire property should be graded to keep water away from your house
- ❑ Many properties also have back of lot or lane drainage, these drainage paths should not be altered or obstructed

Yard Clean-up

- ❑ This spring, when you're cleaning your yard, please try and avoid putting yard waste into the street, lane or gutter – the storm sewer system isn't designed to remove large volumes of leaves, and may become blocked with twigs or branches

For more information:

The City of Saskatoon web site has information, pictures of typical plumbing installations and links to other web sites that may be helpful:

www.saskatoon.ca/org/municipal_engineering/index.asp

City of Saskatoon Building Standards Branch 975-7631 (plumbing permits and regulations)

City of Saskatoon Drainage Complaints 975-2413

City of Saskatoon Water & Sewer Trouble line 975-2491

Fall Cleaning Checklist

Every homeowner should re-complete the spring checklist in the fall and in addition, check the plumbing to ensure that your home and yard are prepared for the spring snowmelt.

Backflow Valve¹

- ❑ Make sure you can access the backflow valve at all times
- ❑ Check the valve – remove any material that may block or prevent the valve from operating properly. Always use rubber gloves when working with sewer systems.
- ❑ Ensure the cover that keeps sewer gas from entering your home is in place

Sump Pit²

- ❑ Clean the pit. Weeping tile drainage may carry small amounts of soil, sand and debris into the pit – the debris should be removed

Sump Pump

- ❑ Check and test your pump – pour water into the pit to activate the pump starting mechanism
- ❑ Remove and thoroughly clean the pump – disconnect the pump from the power source before you handle or clean it; or obtain the services of a qualified electrician if the pump is not equipped with a standard plug-in, and is hard-wired to your home's electrical system
- ❑ Clean the screen that covers the water intake of the pump

Sump Pump Discharge Pipe

- ❑ Check the area where the discharge pipe leaves the house – make sure the discharge point is clean and nothing is blocking the flow
- ❑ Make sure the pump discharge flows away from the foundation – you may want to extend the outlet 1-2 metres away from the foundation during the summer

Notes:

¹Not all homes have backflow valves – if you have one, it is likely located near a perimeter wall in your basement in an access chamber below the basement floor – most often in your utility room and probably near your floor drain. They might be hidden under a carpet or behind boxes of stored goods.

²Depending on the age of your home you may have a sump pit and pump – if you have one, it is likely at or near your basement floor drain, or near an outside wall – often they have electrical wiring leading to the floor, and piping leading away. The sump pit and pump may be hidden under flooring.

If you are not sure what to look for, or how to recognize backflow valves, sump pumps and pits, contact a local plumbing company for assistance in your spring and fall checks.