

# Sanitary Sewer Illegal Connections... What You Need to Know and Learn How They May be Contributing to Flooding in the Municipality

In response to the recent flooding events in Bethel Park along with the excessive rain the region has experienced over the past several years, the Municipality wants to remind residents of the requirements to remove "illegal" connections to the sanitary sewer system.

Elimination of storm water flow from the sanitary sewer system is required. If discovered, the Municipality will begin enforcing the removal of "illegal" connections to the sanitary sewer system. The Municipal Code provides penalties for the failure to comply with a notice to disconnect an illegal connection. (*Municipal Code Section 55.26 and 55.27*)

Due to the recent wet weather events, the Municipality hopes that there will be a high rate of voluntary compliance to investigate private sanitary sewer systems along with the removal of any illegal storm sewer connections with a goal to reduce flooding, wastewater treatment costs and improve water quality.

Following are common questions and answers regarding Sanitary Sewer Systems:

**What is a Sanitary Sewer?** A sanitary sewer is a pipe that is designed solely to transport wastewater from sanitary fixtures in your house or place of business to the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Sanitary sewers in your neighborhood are owned by the Bethel Park Municipal Authority.

**What is a Storm Sewer?** A storm sewer is a pipe that is designed to carry storm related water runoff. Storm sewers are normally much larger than sanitary sewers because they are designed to carry much larger amounts of flow. Storm sewers are owned, operated and maintained by the Municipality of Bethel Park.

**What is an Illegal Connection?** An illegal connection is a connection that permits extraneous storm related water (water from sources other than sanitary fixtures) to enter the sanitary sewer system. The extraneous storm related water is water that should be going to the storm sewer or allowed to soak into the ground without entering the sanitary sewer.

**What are the Different Types of Illegal Connections?** Illegal connections include connections of roof downspouts, sump pumps, footing/foundation drains and basement drains to the house sanitary sewer lines. In addition, defective house sanitary sewer lines cause extraneous water to enter the sanitary sewers and thus they are also illegal connections.

**Where Should Storm Drainage from Downspouts, Sump Pumps and/or Other Drain Appurtenance be Directed if it Cannot be Discharged to the Sanitary Sewer?** Modern subdivision construction standards generally call for water from sump pumps, area drains and the like to be diverted to the storm sewers, front or back yards or above ground drainage ditches.

**Why is it Important for Everyone to Remove Illegal Connections?** Removal of illegal connections will significantly reduce flooding and sewage related back-ups into homes. While your home may not experience back-ups, there are many others who do.

**How can Surcharged Sanitary Sewers Cause Basement Flooding?** A surcharged sewer flows at a level greater than the "normal" level. If the home has sanitary fixtures or floor drains at an elevation below the surcharge level, basement flooding can occur. The sanitary sewers have been designed to transfer sanitary waste only. Extraneous storm water flow added to the normal sanitary flow can exceed the capacity of the sanitary sewer resulting in a situation where the sanitary sewer is "surcharged." Basically, surcharging occurs when the amount of flow trying to get through a pipe exceeds the maximum capacity of the pipe thus building up pressure in the pipe. When pressure builds up, it seeks to relieve itself through any means possible, one of which is by backing up private sanitary services and filling basements and crawlspaces. Reducing the extraneous flow will reduce the surcharging and sewer back-ups.

**Do Illegal Connections Really Contribute Large Amounts of Extraneous Water to the Sanitary Sewer System?** Yes. For example, it takes only five sump pumps operating at full capacity to overload an eight-inch sanitary sewer.

**How does the Municipality Identify Illegal Connections?** The Municipality owns sewer-televising equipment, and conducts smoke and dye testing of the mainline sewers. Private lines are required to be tested at the time of sale or the Municipality can choose to complete a testing project in an area with suspected illegal connections.

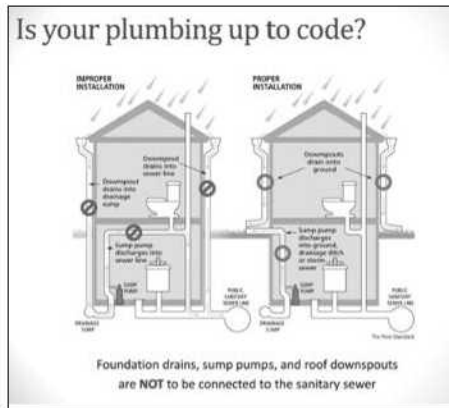
**If Illegal Connections are Discovered, How are they Required to be Corrected?** The following are possible solutions:

- The sump pipe could be run overland to a ditch or swale, which drains to another location.
- The sump pump can be run underground through a 4" or 6" diameter perforated PVC pipe, with holes at the bottom and backfilled with washed gravel. An overflow tube should be placed at the opposite end to allow the water to escape in the event that the volume of the pipe is exceeded. This pipe tube is located at a convenient area of the yard such as a garden. Another option could be to run it to a drywell. Route the sump pump to a storm sewer via a 4" or 6" pipe with a curb relief "bubbler" and tie into the back of an inlet or the crown of the mainline pipe. A permit will be required with proper inspections made by the Municipality.

**I've Never had Basement Flooding Due to a Surcharge Sewer. Why Should I Remove My Illegal Connections?** You may not have basement flooding due to surcharged sewers. But if your plumbing pumps or drains storm related water into the sanitary sewer, it may well be the cause of flooding in your neighbor's basement.

**Is the Requirement to Remove Illegal Connections Unique to Bethel Park?** No. All local governments have adopted ordinances or codes prohibiting the intrusion of extraneous storm related water into sanitary sewers.

Your help in eliminating unauthorized connections is needed; a residential plumber can help you identify if any exist on your property. If you have any questions, visit our website at [www.bethelpark.net](http://www.bethelpark.net) for codes and sewer use laws or call the Municipality at 412-831-6800, Monday – Friday between 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.



## The 2020 Census at a Glance

*Counting everyone once, only once, and in the right place.*

The U.S. Census Bureau is the federal government's largest statistical agency. We are dedicated to providing current facts and figures about America's people, places, and economy. Federal law protects the confidentiality of all individual responses the Census Bureau collects.

The U.S. Constitution requires that each decade we take a count—or a census—of America's population.



The census provides vital information for you and your community.

- It determines how many representatives each state gets in Congress and is used to redraw district boundaries. Redistricting counts are sent to the states by March 31, 2021.
- Communities rely on census statistics to plan for a variety of resident needs including new roads, schools, and emergency services.
- Businesses use census data to determine where to open places to shop.

Each year, the federal government distributes more than \$675 billion to states and communities based on Census Bureau data.

In 2020, we will implement new technology to make it easier than ever to respond to the census. For the first time, you will be able to respond online, by phone, as well as by mail. We will use data that the public has already provided to reduce followup visits. And, we are building an accurate address list and automating our field operations—all while keeping your information confidential and safe.



### KEY MILESTONES

- 2018
  - 2018 End-to-End Census Test
  - 2020 Census questions sent to Congress by March 31, 2018
  - Six regional 2020 Census offices and 40 area census offices open
- 2019
  - Partnership activities launch
  - Complete Count Committees establish
  - Census takers update address list in person
  - Remaining 248 area census offices open
- 2020
  - Advertising begins in January 2020
  - Public response (online, phone, or mail) begins
  - Census Day—April 1, 2020
  - Census takers visit households that haven't responded
  - Apportionment counts sent to the President by December 31, 2020
- 2021
  - Redistricting counts sent to the states by March 31, 2021

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