

Why Must Homeowners Disconnect Their Downspouts?

The disconnection of improperly connected downspouts directly impacts homeowners. It will:

- ▶ Reduce the amount of stormwater that currently enters the sewer system, which can potentially cause flooding during heavy rain events
- ▶ Bring homeowners into compliance with state laws and BWSC's Sewer Use Regulations
- ▶ Reduce the amount of stormwater being sent to the Deer Island Wastewater Treatment Plant
- ▶ Reduce the amount of stormwater that enters the storm drain system (through catch basins in the street), which can improve stormwater quality
- ▶ Assist in controlling water and sewer rates for BWSC customers

How Do Homeowners Benefit from Downspout Disconnection?

By eliminating as many sources of inflow as possible, homeowners are protecting their properties from possible sanitary sewer overflows, or sewer backups, and are helping to minimize cost for sewage treatment.

For More Information

For more information about downspout disconnection, contact BWSC's Community Services Department at 617-989-7000.



Boston Water and Sewer Commission

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Boston Water and Sewer Commission

Downspout Disconnection



What Is a Downspout?

A downspout, also known as a roof leader, carries excess stormwater from roofs and gutters away from homes to yards and grassy areas.

Some downspouts are improperly connected into the sewer system, which is designed to carry wastewater—not stormwater—from homes. Improperly connected downspouts need to be disconnected.

Why Is Downspout Disconnection Important?

During periods of heavy rainfall, excessive amounts of stormwater in a sanitary sewer system can overburden the system and result in flooding of streets and homes. The excess flow can cause sewer overflows into local waterways, which is a violation of the Clean Water Act. Downspouts that discharge to the sewer system are in violation of Massachusetts General Laws, the Massachusetts Plumbing Code, and Boston Water and Sewer Commission's (BWSC's) Sewer Use Regulations.

Stormwater that enters the sewer system as inflow from downspouts is transported to the Deer Island Wastewater Treatment Plant. The expense to BWSC for wastewater treatment is dependent upon the amount of flow sent to the plant. The addition of stormwater increases BWSC operating costs, which are shared by all ratepayers.



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Improper Connections

Improper connection of a downspout to the sanitary sewer system, as shown above, can overburden the sewer system and result in the flooding of streets and homes, and overflows to local waterways.



Proper Connections

Redirecting a downspout to drain into the yard or other landscaped area removes excess flow from the sewer system, greatly reducing the chance of sewer backups and overflows.