



Sump Pumps into the Sanitary Sewer Create Health and Safety Risk!

Aside from the fact that connecting sump pumps to the sanitary sewer is **illegal**, it can cause significant health and safety risks. Sump pumps are designed to pump groundwater and rain water.

Generally, the sanitary sewer pipe in the street is only 8 inches in diameter, and often the pipe slope is not very steep. Many 8 inch sewer pipes are installed with a slope of 0.4%. This means that for every 100 feet of pipe, the pipe goes downhill less than 5 inches. This low slope condition is very common in Washington County sewer collection systems, which means there is only so much sewage water that can flow through this pipe.

For this type of sewer pipe, about 300 gallons of water can flow through it in a minute. If more sewage than this tries to get through the pipe in the street, the sewage will surcharge, that is start filling up the sewer lateral pipes that run to the sewer main from houses. When even more sewage or extra water is sent to the sewer pipe, it will surcharge even farther, eventually pushing back into someone's basement. The sewage might come out of a neighbor's basement toilet or washing machine drain for example.

If hooked up to a house's sewer lateral, a half-horsepower sump pump will pump about 60 gallons to the sewer each minute. That means that if 5 pumps are connected to the sewer, it will be full. Normal sewage flows often fill the sewer main more than half-way already. So if two or three neighbors in a block illegally connect their sump pumps to their sewer lateral, the flow that is trying to get through the sewer main will be more than its capacity of 300 gallons per minute. The sewage in the pipe is going to start backing up!





It is critical that sumps discharge to the yard or storm sewer to avoid health risk and reduce costs to rate payers.



Sump pumps connected to the house sewer lateral is a major contributor to Inflow and Infiltration (I&I). I&I affects the quantity of wastewater that needs to be treated, the capacity of Washington County's sewer pipes, wastewater treatment plant and ultimately, the rate businesses and residents pay to operate and maintain them. The worst impact of I&I is the possibility that the excess sewage flows out of the sewer pipe and into our environment. I&I takes up valuable capacity in the Wastewater Treatment Plant and may limit future sewer connections. I&I adversely

affects the nutrient loadings for the plant discharge. *If ignored, I&I could cost this community millions of dollars.*

It is critical that sump pumps discharge to the yard or storm sewer, not to the sanitary sewer. It is illegal to connect your sump pump into your sanitary lateral. Not only can this cause serious health and safety concerns, it is also costing county rate payers.

The County will be working closely with building trades and homeowners to address sump pumps that are installed incorrectly.

For additional information or questions relating to sump pumps, please contact the Washington County Department of Water Quality at 240-313-2600 or pr@washco-md.net.