

Town of Niagara

Major Rain Events

During major rain events, the Town of Niagara's sewer system becomes overwhelmed. The five sewer lift stations have become full to over capacity at times. When the ground is saturated and an inch of rain falls within an hour, any sewer system would become overwhelmed. The recent rain event was especially challenging. The entire water and sewer department employees, along with the parks department, were out all night manning pumps.

In 2016, the Town had sewer lines relined and manholes sealed at a cost of \$966,612.65. All manhole lids have a plastic liner that does not let water in. It does **not** mean the manhole is full, as some believe.

We have also installed a backflow preventer to prevent city water from coming back into our system. In some other areas of the Town, we have an agreement with the City of Niagara Falls, to discharge our sanitary sewer to them. When the City of Niagara Falls gets overwhelmed, and slows down or stops accepting our sanitary sewer, then our system begins to back up; we do manned pumps to try to alleviate this problem. *The City has a combined system, meaning SANITARY SEWER and GROUND WATER are combined. Therefore, when a major rain event happens, their system becomes overwhelmed.

One of the most common problems in the town is water backing up into cellars during a high water event. As a homeowner, you have a responsibility to alleviate your problems by doing a few things. As a sewer Superintendent, I have a responsibility to help you achieve those common goals.

1. Block or cap off your floor drain. It is the most common place water is allowed into your cellar. Expandable plugs are handy for this and are common at any hardware store.
2. Tighten any cap on your trap (located toward the front of the cellar in most cases). Any cap not screwed in tight or just loosely sitting on top, **can and will leak** during a major rain event because water has a lot of backpressure.
3. Check all fittings in the cellar. They should be tight with **no slack**, install a Fernco plug, especially in deep sinks.
4. Get a plug for your deep sink. Anywhere water can back up into your cellar should be addressed.
5. If water is coming in around the foundation, **install a sump pump**. If your cellar continuously floods, investing in a sump pump should be your primary goal.
6. Roof gutters **should not** be tied into the sanitary sewer. It only adds to our issues and it is **against Town Code**. Any water considered ground or rain water **is not allowed** to enter the sanitary sewer. We pay to have the sewer water treated and it only adds to the problem. Storm water and sewer water **MUST** be kept separate. It is **illegal** for a sump line to be tied into a sanitary line. It is **illegal** for a deep sink, washer or shower to be tied into a storm drain.

Everyone is anxious for their homes during events such as the one we all just experienced. This department knows what needs to be done during these times. Safety of our residents is our primary concern. Tensions do not need to be exacerbated. This department works for the entire town, not just a certain area.

Call the office at 297-2150 ext 123 and make an appointment for an inspection of your basement at no cost, and we will offer our suggestions to help you with your issues.