

Basement Flooding Due to Heavy Rainfall Intensity

What causes flooding to occur?

Unfortunately, basement flooding does occur within the city. When rainfall intensity is very high, any sewer system may be overwhelmed by the volume of flow, causing the sewer to overflow. It's like pouring water from a bucket into a funnel at a rate faster than the funnel can handle. The result, the funnel overflows.

Properties that have deep basements and shallow sewer systems or properties that are located in low lying areas are more vulnerable to flooding. Basements with low fixtures such as floor drains, toilets and showers are also more susceptible to flooding.

What can homeowners do?

If your home is vulnerable to basement flooding, you should:

- If possible, seal any floor drains in your basement, as they are the lowest points of entry of sewer backup.
- Do not store anything of value in your basement. If you have time before the next heavy rainfall, relocate your valuables prior to flooding.
- To prevent sewer blockages never pour grease, paint or other thick liquids into sinks or drains. Avoid flushing items that are not suitable for sanitary sewer disposal such as paper towels, diaper wipes, contraceptive and feminine products.
- Verify with your insurance company if you have flood and sewer backup coverage, especially if your basement is finished. This will usually require a separate rider to your policy.

If a backup occurs in you property, you should:

- Call the Philadelphia Water Department at **215-685-6300** to report the flooding. This information is extremely important to the Water Department in helping us to identify flooding areas, what types of storms resulted in flooding, and which city blocks have been impacted and how often. The Water Department will use this valuable information to investigate and attempt to resolve storm-related flooding.
- Never enter a flooded basement – the risk of electrocution is present. Wait for the water to subside.

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