

■ Good Hands® Advice

Tips to help you be prepared and informed



Protect Your Home from Basement Flooding and Sewer Backups

A flooded basement can be devastating and costly, so it's essential that homeowners understand how flooding occurs and, more importantly, how to prevent it.

Water can enter your home in a variety of ways. It can enter through:

Filtration – leaking walls or cracks in your home's foundation

Sewer or drain backup – caused by an overload in the municipal sewer system

Sump pump backup – caused by an overload in your home's draining system

Here are some tips to help prevent or minimize the effects of basement flooding:

Take Pre-emptive Action

- Never cover floor drains. If covered, water in the basement is prevented from being able to drain away.
- If possible, avoid storing items directly on the basement floor. Keep important documents and materials safe in water-tight plastic containers.
- Find out what disaster relief programs are in place in your community before the unexpected happens. Contact your municipal offices to inquire about possible disaster relief subsidies that are available to eligible homeowners.

Prevent Water Filtration

- Check walls, floors, windows and foundations for cracks or leaks after a heavy rainfall or rapid thaw. Make any necessary repairs immediately.
- Repair or replace damaged weeping tile systems.
- Clear eavestroughs and downspouts of leaves and debris at least once a year – late fall is a good time.
- Ensure downspouts drain properly – ideally six feet away from the home.
- Be sure the grading around your home drains water away from all exterior walls.

- Consider soft surface landscaping to direct storm water into the ground rather than the local sewer systems (e.g. increase sodded areas, porous pavements).
- Consider the installation of rain barrels to prevent runoff.

Prevent Backups

- Get a licensed professional to:
 - install an anti-backflow valve
 - install a sump pump with a reliable power backup where appropriate
 - inspect your current equipment
 - clear drains of roots or obstructions
 - service your septic system
 - ensure your drain systems are working properly
- Clean sewer backup prevention valves annually.
- Keep drains free of obstruction by not pouring grease down the drain or flushing objects down the toilet.
- Replace your sump pump when it wears out, usually after a lifespan of 10-15 years.
- Purchase a backup generator for your sump pump in the event of power failure.

What to Do in the Event of a Basement Flood or Sewer Backup:

- Make safety a priority – don't enter the area unless you are sure it is safe to do so.
- Avoid contact with human waste, dirty water or electrical hazards.
- Don't attempt to shut off your electricity if water is present. Call your hydro company immediately.
- If the area is safe, move furniture and valuables to prevent further damage.

For more helpful tips and advice, visit allstate.ca/learningcentre, contact your local Allstate Insurance Agency or call 1-800-allstate.

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