

noncompliant connections



compliant connections



Help Reduce Sanitary Sewer Overflows

A guide for Onondaga County Homeowners

Learn more

For more information about best management practices or local ordinances, please contact:

Onondaga County Department of Water Environment Protections
 Plumbing Control
 7120 Henry Clay Blvd
 Liverpool, NY 13088
 Telephone: (315) 435-6614
www.savetherain.us/ms4

History

Since 1998 Onondaga County has been under an Amended Consent Judgment (ACJ) aimed at cleaning up Onondaga Lake, the Seneca River and their tributaries in order to bring them into compliance with the Clean Water Act. In recent years the ACJ remediation plan has evolved into a multi-faceted approach including:

- Upgrades to sewer and stormwater systems to reduce overflows of sewage into local waterways during heavy storms
- Improving the Metropolitan Syracuse Wastewater Treatment Plant to reduce discharge of pollutants to Onondaga Lake
- Monitoring Onondaga Lake, the Seneca River, and their tributaries to track cleanup progress
- 'Save the Rain': a new County-wide campaign to educate the public about green infrastructure and reducing runoff



Joanne M. Mahoney
County Executive



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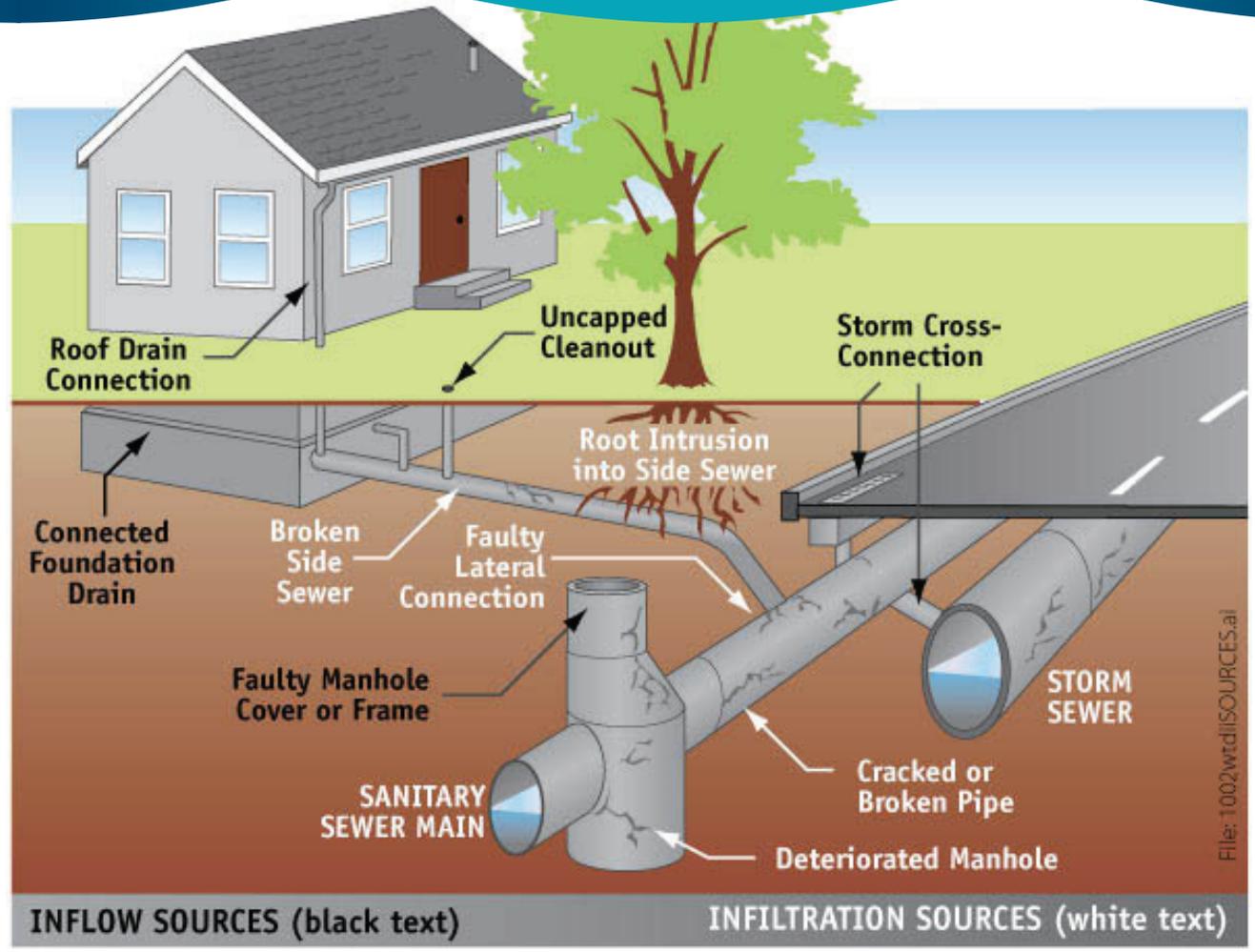


Sump Pumps and Sewer Overflows

Onondaga County and its Department of Water Environment Protection have been hard at work reducing the inflow and infiltration of clear water (stormwater and groundwater) into the sanitary system. **During heavy rains this additional water often overwhelms sewer mains, threatening public health by causing untreated sewage to backup into basements and overflow into Onondaga Lake and its tributaries.**

Among the sources of such excess are residential basement sump pumps, footer drains, and downspouts which contribute millions of gallons of runoff via illicit sewer line connections. **When you consider that 1,000 gallons of water can run off an average house during a 1-inch rainstorm, this can add up to create a sizeable burden for the sewer system.** The new Onondaga County Sewer Use Ordinance (SUO), passed in January 2011, includes tools to effectively address noncompliant sources of inflow and infiltration to assure that the sewer system has adequate capacity for future generations.

Homeowners with improper connections are thus strongly encouraged to disconnect their sump pumps and downspouts and safely reroute them outside into their yards, away from their home's foundation, and away from their neighbors' property.



Green solutions

In addition to disconnecting sump pumps and downspouts, a variety of other green options are available to homeowners interested in reducing the flow of runoff and pollution into our sanitary sewers and, in turn, help protect the environment:

- Collect roof runoff in rain barrels and use this water later to irrigate your lawn and garden

- Direct water to grassy or vegetated areas or visit www.savetherain.us for information on how to construct a rain garden to capture and slow runoff and reduce erosion
- Consider replacing part of your driveway or walkway with porous pavement, paving stones, and other pervious surfaces
- Plant trees and other native vegetation to promote infiltration

Disconnecting Noncompliant Connections

First locate your sump pump. If it connects to any other pipe in your home it is likely incorrectly connected to the sanitary sewer. Also, downspouts that disappear into the ground are also likely improperly connected, carrying rainwater, dead leaves and debris into the sewer. Each of these connections should be redirected into your yard at ground level.

Before disconnecting make sure your sump pump is only draining clear floodwater from your basement.

Sump pumps that drain a washing machine or sink drain should NOT be discharged into your yard.

Disconnecting your own sump pump is possible if you are familiar with plumbing. But if not, please contact a licensed and bonded plumber or approved home improvement professional for help.

- To Disconnect your sump pump from the Sanitary Sewers:
- Step 1: Turn off the electrical supply
 - Step 2: Remove old pipes
 - Step 3: Seal the connection to the sewer
 - Step 4: Redirect water flow outside