Fort Wayne

City Utilities

***News You Can Use***

**Preparing for Heavy Rainfall**

Heavy rainfall -- a large amount of rain in a short period of time or melting of a heavy layer of snow -- may cause flooding, sewer backups into homes and businesses and neighborhood drainage concerns. When these “wet weather” events occur, they highlight the importance of taking precautions ahead of time to protect your property.

Aging, damaged and undersized sanitary, combined and storm sewers may cause a variety of flooding and backup issues. City Utilities is investing millions of dollars to improve these systems. However, even when sewer and drainage systems are preforming at their best, some wet weather events will be too big for the public sewer system to handle. There are a number of things you as a property owner can do to reduce the likelihood that issues with public infrastructure will damage your property during these extreme weather events.

What City Utilities is doing:

* Investing in infrastructure
* Rehabilitating sewers
* Building new infrastructure to reduce the discharge of combined sanitary sewage and stormwater to the rivers when it rains
* Regularly cleaning storm sewer inlets
* Preventive sewer maintenance such as removing grease and roots that could cause blockages

City Utilities and property owners share the responsibility to prepare for wet weather events and the damage they may cause.

What you can do to prepare can do when heavy precipitation is expected:

* Check and clean private drains on your property. These include driveway culverts, yard drains, gutters and downspouts.
* Be sure to check the drains again after the rain starts to ensure they are working properly. While you may have cleared a grate or drain before a storm event, the rain or snowmelt may wash debris back over the drain which may cause flooding.
* The building sewer between you house and the public sewer line is your responsibility. If you have trees in your yard, you may need to have your building sewer de-rooted to avoid sewer backups.
* Install a backflow prevention device on your building sewer. This is a device you control, so even if the public sewer system is full, you can keep the sewage from coming into your home.
* Make sure your sump pump is working.
* Respect the storm drain – it’s not a trash receptacle. Never dump anything down a storm drain and don’t use it to dispose of leaves, grass clippings or other yard waste.
* If you see leaves, grass clippings, plastic bottles or other trash and debris in front of a storm drain, please clear the drain and bag the debris before the next rainfall. Removing the debris may help to minimize street flooding.
* If you see sinkholes or if you know that a particular storm inlet never takes in water, call 311 to report the problem

Tips for using 311 during heavy precipitation:

* The 311 call center is staffed Monday – Friday from 7:30 AM – 5:30 PM
* 311 may have extended hours if there is a severe storm
* 311 may become extremely busy during a heavy rain, so please be patient
* If you call 311 after hours to report a utility emergency such as street flooding or a basement backup, please be patient and listen through all of the options and prompts. If it is after hours you will be directed to press certain keys on your phone to speak to a person about a water or sewer emergency.

If you do experience a sewer backup, City Utilities and the Centers for Disease Control offer information on their websites to help with cleanup.

[www.cityoffortwayne.org/utilities/clean-river-team/cleaning-up-after-a-flood-or-sewer-backup.html](http://www.cityoffortwayne.org/utilities/clean-river-team/cleaning-up-after-a-flood-or-sewer-backup.html)

[www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/floods/cleanupwater.asp](http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/floods/cleanupwater.asp)