

Village of Brookfield

Community Development Department

Disconnecting Your Downspouts

The Village of Brookfield is committed to addressing flooding due to heavy rain events. One simple solution is residential downspout disconnection. *Downspouts that are directly connected to the Village's sewer system increase the volume and rate of storm water runoff entering the storm sewer system. Both of these factors can exacerbate flooding conditions.* By having downspouts from homes "splash on grade" (grade is a technical term for the ground), it allows runoff to be partially absorbed by the ground which decreases the volume of water entering the system and is also carried more slowly to the storm sewer system. This slower movement of water helps prolong the time at which storm sewers reach their capacity.

Many homeowners have connected their downspouts to the storm sewer for a variety of reasons, most likely to avoid having water accumulate on their property during rain events. In an effort to help lessen the impact to the storm sewer system and assist with community flooding, the Village of Brookfield is asking all residents to check their downspout connections, and if they are tied directly to the storm sewer via an underground pipe, disconnect them for the collective benefit of the community.

Why Should I Disconnect?

Connected downspouts can exacerbate flooding conditions. Each downspout on your home can deliver many gallons of water per minute to the sewer system. This contributes to the inundation of the storm sewer and can lead to basement backups and sewer overflows. By simply disconnecting a downspout, you can make a difference in keeping excess water out of the sewer system and maybe your house or your neighbors.

How Do I Know If My Downspout is Connected?

A quick visual inspection of your downspout will reveal if it "splashes on grade" or has an underground connection. A direct connection will flow into a buried underground pipe, as in the picture below:



A downspout that "splashes on grade" is seen in the picture here:



Will My Yard Become Wet If I Disconnect My Downspout?

A downspout that splashes on grade is designed to allow rainwater to sheet drain over the ground, and slowly make its way to the storm sewer system. This may lead to areas of your property being temporarily saturated while the water is absorbed or working its way to the storm sewer system. To make sure that storm water runoff is properly directed and will have no adverse impact to your property or adjacent properties, you may want to discuss disconnection with a professional or the Community Development Department. They can help determine whether your property is correctly graded to ensure proper drainage, or if re-grading is necessary.

What if I Don't Want a Wet Yard but Want to Disconnect?

The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD) sells rain barrels at a deeply discounted price. Rain Barrels are connected to your downspouts and act as collectors. They can help limit the amount of water released into your yard during rain events. It also provides an additional source of water to be used for watering landscape and other non-drinkable uses. Visit the MWRD website to learn more about their rain barrel program at: mwrld.org/rain-barrels.

Do I Need a Village Permit or a Plumber?

If you are simply returning the downspout to a “splash on ground” condition, you do not need a licensed plumber to do the work. You do not need a permit for a simple disconnection. To ensure a correct disconnection, you may contact the Community Development Department so an Inspector can review the work and answer any questions you may have.

How Much Will This Cost?

If you can disconnect the downspout yourself (see directions at the bottom of the page), a minimal cost for some basic hardware supplies will be all that is necessary. However, if you are unsure of doing this project on your own, you may want to contact a landscaper or handyman to assist you.

Where Should I Direct the Water?

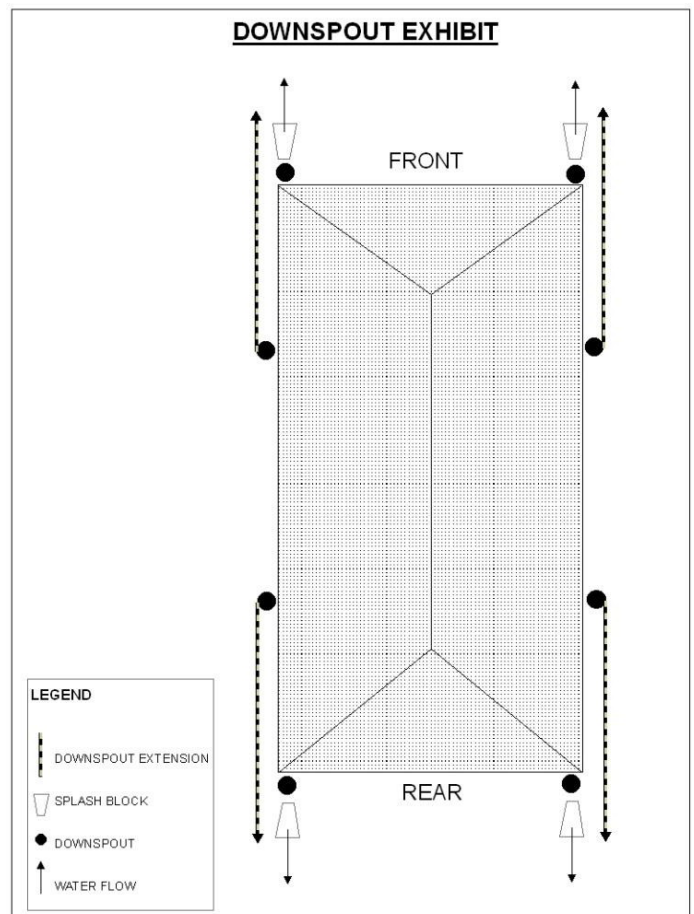
Your downspout must drain toward either the front or rear of your property. Water that is directed to your side yard may flow onto an adjacent property, which may cause adverse effects to your neighbor's property. It is also important to keep downspouts directed away from your window wells, which can cause flooding issues. The exhibit to the right depicts a typical home with correct downspout drainage.

My Downspout is in the Middle of My Side Yard. What Should I Do?

A side yard downspout is to run to the front or the rear of the property, along the foundation of the home, through an extension downspout. Again, avoid your window wells or pointing your downspouts toward your neighbor's property. Another solution in this scenario is to place a rain barrel under the downspout to collect the water.

Can I Run My Downspout Extension More Than Five Feet?

You may run an extension downspout *adjacent* to your home, but your downspout must disperse water on your property and not negatively impact a neighboring property or the sidewalks, streets, or alleys.



How Do I Disconnect My Downspout?

Supplies needed to disconnect your downspout:

- hacksaw
- tape measure
- hammer
- screw driver
- pliers
- sheet metal screws
- downspout elbow
- downspout extension
- splash block
- rubber cap



Step 1

Identify which of your downspouts are connected to the storm sewer system and review the area to determine the best method/location for discharge.

Step 3

Cut the downspout with a hacksaw.



Step 2

Measure 9" from where the downspout enters the sewer connection.



Step 4

Cap the sewer standpipe. This prevents water from going in. In most cases, you should be able to use a simple rubber cap secured by hose clamp. You can also use a wing-nut test plug if available cap sizes do not fit.



Step 5

Insert the downspout *into* the elbow (if you put the elbow into the downspout, it will leak). You may need to crimp the end of the downspout with a pair of pliers to get a good fit.



Step 6

Attach a downspout pipe extension to carry water away from the house and foundation. You can use a hacksaw to cut the extension to the desired length. Be sure to insert the elbow into the extension to prevent leaks. Secure the elbow and extension with sheet metal screws. To prevent erosion where the water drains, you can place a splash block at the end of the downspout extension.



I Want to Speak with Someone at the Village About This. Who Can I Call?

Do you have any general questions about downspouts? Please feel free to call the Community Development Department at: (708) 485-1412 or email: CodeEnforcement@brookfieldil.gov to schedule an inspection.