



## Sump Pumps – Make the right connection!

If you have a sump pump you probably hear it running during the spring and after rainy weather. A sump pump is a pump that is used to protect a basement from flooding and general moisture intrusion by removing rainwater that infiltrates into the soil around the basement foundation.

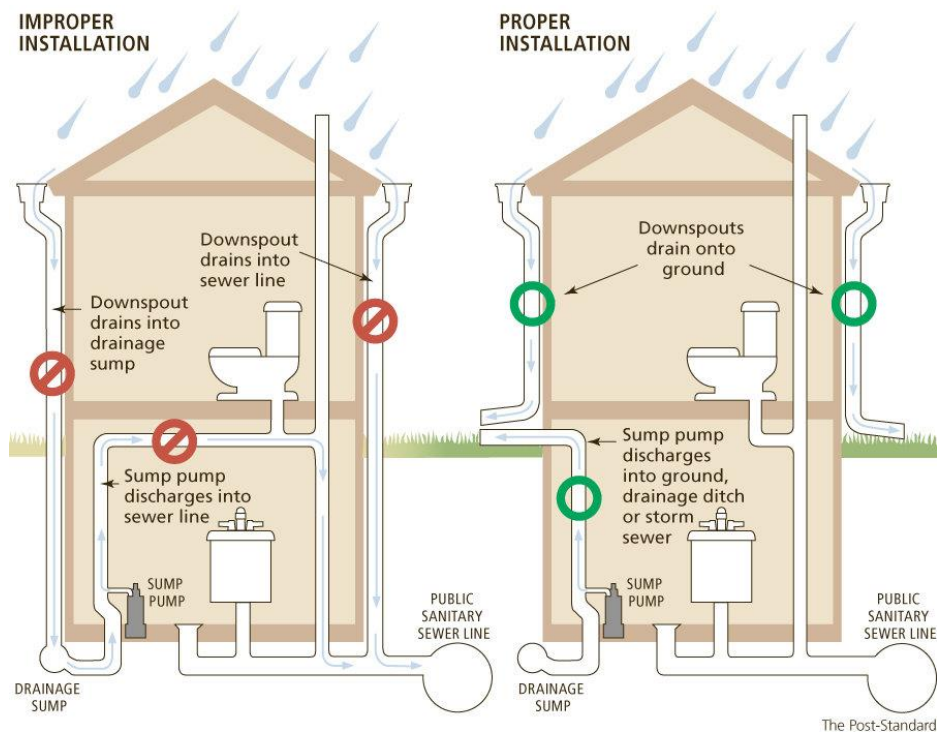
This water travels downward through the ground and is collected in the foundation drain (also referred to as weeping tiles) and directed to the sump pit.

The sump pit is where the sump pump is usually located. The sump pit appears as a hole in the basement floor and is usually either a plastic or concrete container buried into the ground so it can collect water from the foundation drain.



When water from the foundation drain reaches a certain level in the sump pit a float switch is triggered, which activates your sump pump. Water from the sump pit is then pumped out and discharged through a pipe in the wall to an outside location far enough from the foundation wall to prevent the discharged water from re-entering your foundation drain. The water is then naturally absorbed into the ground. If there is a storm sewer then the sump pit discharge pipe may be directly connected to the storm sewer which discharges the clear water to ditches, creeks and ultimately Lake Ontario.

### Not All Connections are good!



In some homes, sump pumps do not pump the water to the lawn outside of your home. Instead, they are connected into the sanitary lateral that flows directly into the sanitary sewer system. These types of connections are in violation of the Ontario Building Code and the Town of Cobourg's Sewer Use By-Law 22-2008 and could actually result in your basement flooding with sewage!

Sanitary sewer pipes are designed in size and slope to carry only sewage and dirty water, not clean groundwater and rainwater. Typically the sanitary sewer pipe in a residential street is only 25 cm to 37.5 cm in diameter and the slope is not very steep. Therefore, only so much liquid can flow through this pipe. If more liquid than the pipe is designed to carry tries to flow through it, the pipe will start to fill up and back up the sewer line back into your home.

A sump pump that is connected to the sanitary sewer is defeating the purpose of keeping your basement dry as it could result in it flooding with sewage and dirty water! It is therefore critical that sump pumps discharge to your yard, the ditch or the storm sewer and not to the sanitary sewer.

Please **make the right connection** to protect your home and the municipal sanitary sewer system. If you are unsure or know you have an illegal sump pump or foundation drain connection please contact a plumber to determine what options are available to you to alleviate the situation.

[Need more information?](#)

Please contact Environmental Services at 905-372-7332

Bill Peeples  
Manager of Environmental Services

<b>Do's</b>	<b>Don'ts</b>
Do have your downspouts extended far away from your house	Don't have your downspouts connected to your foundation drain
Do have your sump pump discharge outside away from your foundation	Don't have your sump pump discharge to the floor drain or laundry tub (these are connected to the sanitary sewer)
Do have your sump pump discharge to the ditch if one is available	Don't discharge your sump pump to a neighbouring property
Do protect your discharge hose from freezing in the winter (i.e. bury it below the frost line if discharging to a ditch)	Don't discharge your sump pump to the sidewalk or roadway
Do have a back-up battery on your sump pump in the case of a power failure	