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Drain pain! Rainy season can disrupt City sewer system – how you can help

We can't stop the rain, but local residents can help keep it out of the sewer system.

"We have separate sewer and storm drain systems for a reason," explains Lorne Sandberg, City of Campbell River wastewater supervisor. *"Significant storm water in the sewer pipes can back up the system and even cause overflows, which could pose a risk for public health and the environment."*

Excess storm water in the system also reduces efficiency and increases the cost of operating the sewer treatment plant, the Norm Wood Environmental Centre.

"We want to prevent storm water overwhelming the system to protect effluent quality because treated wastewater ultimately ends up in Discovery Passage," Sandberg adds.

The City monitors rain and storm water flowing on public property, and is now calling on residents and business property owners to help.

"A lot of the rainwater that makes its way into our sanitary sewer comes from private property," Sandberg says. *"As a property owner, there are several things you can do to help."*

Tips for preventing storm water from entering the sewer system:

- Inspect roof gutters, downspouts and groundwater sump pumps to make sure they are NOT connected to the sewer system. If they are, have them disconnected. Direct downspouts into storm system or rain barrels, or onto lawns or garden beds.
- Have building sewer connections inspected by a plumber to identify leaking pipes – with the added benefit of catching potential system blocks before they cause sewer backups.
- Avoid planting any trees or shrubs over sanitary sewer or storm drain systems
- Never try to drain standing water from your property into a manhole or any other unidentified open pipes. Call the City's Dogwood Operations Centre with questions or to report concerns (250-286-4033).

"People are welcome to call us with questions about how they can help minimize the amount of rain that ends up in the sewer system," Sandberg sums up.

Discharging storm water into the sanitary sewer can be a fineable offence (as per Bylaw 1507).

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