
You may be experiencing drainage problems such as a flooded basement, basement seepage, excessive sump pump flow and water ponding on your yard for long periods after rain. Depending on whether your problem is with surface water or subsurface water, the options for resolving the problems are different.

This pamphlet provides guidance in addressing your drainage problems and provides a general understanding of Illinois Drainage Law and the DuPage County Storm water Ordinance. In most cases, the property owner is responsible for addressing problems on their property.

Overview of Illinois Drainage Law

The basic principle of the Law is that owners of lower ground must receive water that naturally flows from higher ground. It also states that:

Landowners may not:

- Obstruct the flow of surface water using dams created by landscaping berms, fences, gardens or compost bins;
- Change the location of discharge;
- Increase or accelerate the flow of water unreasonably as to cause erosion or damage downstream; or
- Fill depressed areas that retain storm water.

Landowners may:

- Widen and clean channels or swales that carry surface water; or
- Drain standing or ponding water in the direction of natural flow.

DuPage County Storm Water Ordinance

The Village of Glen Ellyn has adopted the DuPage County Countywide Storm Water and Floodplain Ordinance. All developments in the Village of Glen Ellyn must adhere to this Ordinance. In general it requires developers to demonstrate that during a 100 year flood event the proposed development shall not:

- Increase the volume of runoff;
 - Contribute to adjacent flood problems; or
 - Alter the direction of runoff.
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Types of Water

Surface Water

Storm water naturally runs to lower areas and may stand on the ground for hours or days after a storm event. Every lot should be graded so that water on the top of the surface of the ground can be drained away from the home. Drainage paths or shallow grass or rock-lined channels called swales should be provided around your home to allow storm water to safely pass. Downspout water should be directed away from your foundation, toward open areas of your rear or front yard.

Subsurface Water

The water table is the level of groundwater and it can fluctuate several feet throughout the year. In some areas, the water table is affected by natural springs or underground seams of gravel or sand. Water may flow underground throughout the year or during rainy periods. When basements are constructed, drain pipes and sump pumps are used to take groundwater away from the foundation and to discharge it at ground level to protect the home.

Downspout and Sump Pump Discharges

Code Requirements: The Village Code states “No person shall discharge any water from sump pumps, gutters, roof drains, or similar drainage devices in a concentrated matter onto or over a public sidewalk or street.” (Title VIII, Chapter 1, Section 8.1.10b).

Section 115-13.12 of the DuPage Storm Water Ordinance states that to the extent practical “all runoff from rooftops and parking lots, and discharge from sump pumps, that does not discharge into a site runoff storage facility shall be directed onto vegetated swales or filter strips, for a distance of at least 50 feet.”

According to the Village Code, discharging sump pumps into the sanitary sewer is illegal (Title VII, Chapter 9, Section 16).

Guidance: Sump pump discharges and downspouts shall discharge at a point that maximizes drainage over a grassed or vegetated area on the property. At a minimum, this distance shall be 20 feet from **any** property line. The sump pump discharge should be extended at least 5 feet from the foundation, to prevent the recycling of water back into the drain tile around the basement. If there is poor drainage away from the foundation, the gutter

downspouts may also be extended away from the foundation to reduce flow into the sump pump drain.

In some cases a sump pump is active or runs frequently when it is not raining. This can cause water to continuously drain across a property line into other private property or into the public right-of-way. In these cases additional steps may be required, such as:

- Building a dry (rock filled) well to accept sump pump flows;
- Building a curtain drain system, similar to a septic field arrangement. This system involves a series of shallow perforated drain pipes or rock-filled trenches that spread the water out below the surface and promote infiltration into the soil away from the foundation;
- Building a rain garden, which is a garden that consists of plants that thrive in wet conditions;
- Making a direct connection to the Village’s storm sewer, if available. This is truly a last resort and may increase the load on the Village’s storm sewer system. An approval from the Public Works Department is required .

Please note that in some cases sump pumps are not discovered to be active until after the building permit to construct the home is closed. In this case, the Village will still pursue a resolution to the situation with the property owner. Active sump pumps can be a nuisance, cause property damage and in some cases be hazardous.

Side and Rear Yards

In some cases the maturity of trees and shrubs and additions to the landscaping, such as gardens, compost piles and paths, have changed the way storm water passes through your property. Even the addition of mulch every year can add inches to your property over time. You may need to rethink your landscaping to protect your home from flooding. Removal of hedge rows along side and rear yards can help to open up a path for storm water runoff. Keep side and rear yards clear of obstructions.

Surface Ponding

Because of the topography of Glen Ellyn, many homeowners are impacted by low depressions in their yards with no way for water to drain away. In most instances, ponding water dissipates within 24 to 72 hours of the end of a rain storm. During periods of steady rain with saturated or frozen ground, the water may stand for a longer period of time. The filling of these depressions with any material is not allowed because the filling on one property may increase the flooding on neighboring properties.

Most lawn grasses have short root systems that cannot tolerate wet soil. Native grasses and plants have deeper root systems that can help move the water into the soil. Rain gardens are an excellent way to incorporate areas of moderate flooding into your landscaping. By using native, water loving plants and trees you can use the water to your advantage. The internet is an excellent source of information on what plants are to be in sunny or shady rain gardens.

You may choose to install a small drainpipe to help drain the depression slowly. To reduce the length of time water ponds on your property, you may be able to use gravel and perforated drain pipes, a small yard inlet and pipe connection to a storm sewer or route the water to a down stream drainage path. Please note that connecting directly to the storm sewer requires working with the Village and obtaining the appropriate permits. These types of solutions often require neighboring homeowners to work together.

Flooding

If your home is in a designated floodplain you can look at ways to flood-proof your home. You can take simple steps like building berms or floodwalls around low entry points, such as window wells or doorways or increasing the size of drainage swales around your home. You may never be able to eliminate the potential for flooding but you may reduce the frequency of flooding.

WHERE DO I FIND HELP?

In some instances, a professional landscaper familiar with Glen Ellyn codes can help. In more difficult situations, homeowners will require the services of a Professional Engineer to design a solution to their problem. The Village of Glen Ellyn Engineering staff and consultants will not design a solution for residents.

The following is a list of engineering firms in alphabetical order who have successfully designed projects in the Village of Glen Ellyn. Please note the Village is not endorsing any firm, rather this list is intended to provide residents with a place to start.

Civil Engineering Services	(630) 577-1551
Jacob & Hefner Associates	(630) 942-9000
Koziol Engineering Services	(630) 435-8686
Steinbrecher Land Surveyors	(630) 293-8900
Webster, McGrath & Ahlberg	(630) 668-7603

General Permit Requirements

The following is a list of activities, related to drainage, that require a permit from the Village of Glen Ellyn Planning and Development Department:

Disturbance of 300 sq. ft. or more, including:

- Landscaping / grading activities;
- Construction of patios, sidewalks, sport courts or other impervious surfaces;
- New driveway installation or reconstruction/resurfacing of existing driveways;
- Construction of garages and additions;
- Demolition of existing structures; or
- Connection to a storm sewer for an active sump pump or a yard drain. The connection also requires approval by the Village Public Works Department.

VILLAGE OF GLEN ELLYN

DRAINAGE AROUND YOUR HOME



PLANNING AND
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