

Does Your Home Need a Flood Prevention Tune Up?

Much like a car, a home needs regular tune ups to keep it functioning properly. Your home was originally constructed with specific features designed to reduce the risk of rain and snow melt from flowing into your basement. Also, at the time of construction, the soil around your home was carefully graded to direct water away from your foundation and to direct water off your property into the municipal stormwater system.

Over time, if your home’s flood prevention features have not been maintained, if the underground pipes that carry water or sewage away from your house have been damaged or clogged or if the original lot drainage was changed on your property, you are at increased risk of basement flooding.

Does your home need a flood prevention tune up? Please see the chart below for signs of trouble and what you can do to repair, upgrade and maintain your home’s flood protection features to increase the likelihood that your basement will stay dry and comfortable, as it was originally intended to be.

Outside Your Home

One of the best ways to find out how your home’s outdoor drainage systems are performing is to go outside during a heavy rain or during a spring thaw and watch where the water is flowing. Is it moving freely away from your home and then offsite? If so, that is great! If it is overflowing from your rain barrel, spilling out of cracks in your eaves troughs, pooling at your foundation, or ponding on your lot for over 24 hours, it means that your home is in need a flood prevention tune up!

Item	Signs of Trouble	Repair/ Upgrade	Maintenance
Nearest Stormwater Drain	Clogged with debris, pooling of water during heavy rains or spring thaws	Remove debris regularly, if this does not address pooling contact the City for repair	Check once per season, do not sweep leaves onto storm drains in the fall
Grading Around Foundation	Water pooling at your foundation, ice buildup in the winter	Regrade so that water flows away from the foundation	Spring and fall check for grading problems and correct these
Lot Grading	Water pooling in the yard or on driveway, water flowing directly onto neighbour’s property	Correct grading so that water flows to the municipal storm sewer system, if grading has been changed to soak up water onsite ensure that water is absorbed within 24 hours is at least 10’ from foundation	Examine during heavy rain or spring melt, correct as needed

Driveways and Sidewalks	Hard surfaces sloped towards foundation or cracked surface, pooling of water, ice build-up in winter	Repair hard surfaces so that water flows away from foundation, repair cracks, where possible direct downspouts away from hard surfaces	Examine during heavy rain or spring melt, correct as needed
Windows	Broken seals, broken glass, damaged frame	Repair and/or replace seals, glass, frames	Check and repair/replace in spring and fall, shovel snow at least 1m away from windows in winter
Window Wells	Non-existent, filled with debris or water pooling inside window well	Install window wells so that edge is 6" from the ground, consider installing plastic covers	Remove debris in spring and fall, check for pooling water after heavy rains
Foundation Walls	Cracks, efflorescence present (salt deposits)	Repair cracks, consult with professional to determine root cause of cracks, efflorescence	Check and repair cracks spring and fall, shovel snow at least 1m away from foundation in winter
Eaves Troughs	Missing sections, leaking at joints or overflowing	Replace missing sections, repair leaks and remove debris	Spring and fall check for and repair leaks, remove debris
Downspouts	Depositing water less than 6' (2m) away from foundation	Extend/replace downspouts to ensure water flows smoothly at least 6 feet (2m) from the foundation	Spring and fall check and replace, check weekly during growing season
Rain Barrels	Overflowing during heavy rains and/or overflow hose depositing water at foundation	Ensure amount of water flowing into barrel equals amount flowing out to prevent overflow at top, ensure that your rain barrel's overflow hose extends at least 6'(2m) away from your foundation	Drain and disconnect after Hallowe'en and re-attach downspout, reinstall in spring

Inside Your Home

Are there signs of trouble in your basement? Does your sump pump run regularly or not run when you need it? Have you experienced sewer backup during heavy rains? Is there a musty or mouldy smell in your basement? A tune up will help make your basement a drier and more comfortable space.

Item	Signs of Trouble	Repair/Upgrade	Maintenance
Water Pipes and Appliances	Leaking, corrosion	Inspect plumbing and fixtures, repair, replace as needed, install flood alarms	Inspect on an annual basis
Sump Pit and Pump(s)	Running at frequent intervals, pump seized and not working, no cover on sump pit	Repair/replace pump, get backup pump and back-up power source in case of power failure, purchase alarm, cover sump pit	Test/maintain pumps and batteries, test alarms in spring and fall
Backwater Valve	Lack of backwater valve, sewage coming up through toilets and sinks	Check with a plumber to determine if a backwater valve is right for your home, clean and test your backwater valve	Clean and test your backwater valve each spring and fall, keep fats, oil and grease out of your sink to prevent clogging
Floor Drain	Foul smell coming from drain, sewage backing up into basement, roots visible in drain, no standing water in drain, drain covered or blocked	Contact City to explain problem, contact plumber if City determines private property issue, remove covering from drain, ensure open pathway for flood water to flow to drain	Test to ensure water running freely in spring and fall, keep drain and flow path to drain clear
Foundation Walls	Cracks, leaks or stains present, efflorescence	Repair leaks and cracks inside and outside the home, if foundation drains present inspect and repair if needed	Check for leaks and efflorescence during heavy rain and spring melts, repair as needed
Basement Floor	Cracks, leaks or stains present, efflorescence	Repair leaks and cracks, check buried pipes for leaks, if foundation drains present inspect and repair if needed	Check for leaks and efflorescence during heavy rain and spring melts, repair as needed

Item	Signs of Trouble	Repair/Upgrade	Maintenance
Stored Items	Items touching unfinished walls or floors, damp to the touch, smell of mould or visible mildew	Remove damaged items, store items in waterproof containers 3' off the floor and away from walls, remove highly valuable items from basement	Spring and fall remove and properly store items
Indoor Humidity	Musty or mildew smell, furnishings damp to the touch	Remove indoor sources of moisture (e.g. firewood storage, dryer vented to inside). Ensure bathrooms are vented with fans strong enough to hold a tissue, run fans for 30 minutes after showering, run dehumidifiers to achieve 30-50% humidity	Run dehumidifier to achieve 30-50% humidity year round
Furnishings and Electronics	Items prone to water damage and/or mould used in basement, electronics on floor	Replace items that are not easily damaged by water e.g. couches with metal legs, raise electronics and mount on walls	Inspect and correct in spring and fall
Basement Finishes	Finishes are easily damaged by water e.g. carpet, drywall	When renovating select materials that are water resistant e.g. ceramic tile, cement board, spray foam insulation and items that are easily removed and cleaned (e.g. area rugs)	Replace items as budget permits to reduce replacement cost in case of flood