





**DOWNSPOUT
DISCONNECTION &
RAIN BARREL USE**

*Protecting your home and
the environment*



The image shows a white rain barrel with a black hose connected to a downspout. The barrel is placed on a bed of white gravel next to a stone wall. There are some red flowers in the foreground. The entire scene is framed in a circular inset.

**DOWNSPOUT
DISCONNECTION**



The image shows two circular insets. The top inset shows a downspout with a red cap and a pile of brown leaves in front of it. The bottom inset shows a downspout with a white cap and a garden bed in front of it. The entire scene is framed in a circular inset.



WHAT IS A DOWNSPOUT?

Downspouts are the vertical pipes that carry rain water away from your roof and eavestroughs. The downspouts may be connected to your private sewer drain, cistern, rainbarrel or discharge the water directly onto your lawn or garden.

WHAT IS A DOWNSPOUT DISCONNECTION?

A downspout disconnection is the process by which your existing downspout is cut (approximately 9 inches) above the drain pipe and the drain pipe is then capped. An elbow and an extension are then added to the connection in order to divert the rainwater from flowing into your home's private sewer drain. A splash pad is added at the end of the downspout to help direct the flow and protect landscaping.



BENEFITS OF DOWNSPOUT DISCONNECTION



Downspout disconnection positively impacts the quality of the water in our Harbour

By today's design standards, sewers are separated into sanitary and storm sewers, however in the older parts of Hamilton rainwater and sanitary sewage mix in a combined sewer system. During major storm events, the combined sewer system holds the excess in overflow storage tanks until the storm has passed to prevent the treatment plants from becoming overwhelmed. By disconnecting your downspouts, you help reduce the volume of rainwater from entering the combined system and minimize the potential of the sewer overflow tank discharging into the Harbour.



ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

Recharges Groundwater Sources

It helps replenish and protect the groundwater table and reduces and delays stormwater runoff.

Frees up capacity, saves money and helps the environment

When water in the combined sewer system reaches the Wastewater Treatment plant, the treatment plant must treat the rainwater as it has been mixed with sanitary sewage. By disconnecting your downspouts in a combined sewer area, it will reduce wastewater flows to the treatment plant and will create energy savings and increased effectiveness at the Wastewater Treatment plant which in turn produces fewer greenhouse gas emissions.

Free water for irrigation

By disconnecting your downspout and capturing the rainwater in a harvesting system or rain barrels, you can save that water for irrigating your plants and gardens instead of using tap water.



RAIN BARRELS

AN OLD IDEA THAT STILL MAKE SENSE TODAY!

Rain Barrels are not a new idea, they have been used to collect garden rainwater for generations. The use of rain barrels is an idea that has stood the test of time. Why should you use a rain barrel?


Here are a few reasons:

- Rain water is naturally softened water which is ideal for delicate houseplants, car washing and window cleaning
- A rain barrel prevents storm water pollution of your local waterways
- A rain barrel reduces the volume of water flowing to the sewage treatment facility
- Chlorine-free water helps maintain a healthy biotic community in the soil
- Rain water is ideal for watering your grass and outdoor plants

How to Adapt Your Downspout for a rain barrel

1. Cut off the lower portion of the downspout (above the elbow)
2. Re-attach downspout elbow a few inches above the top of the rain barrel
3. Follow the manufacturer's instruction for setting up the rain barrel





WINTERIZING YOUR RAIN BARREL

To avoid damage to your rain barrel, be sure to winterize it before the first sign of frost. The manufacturer's information included with each rain barrel recommends:

- Drain the rain barrel and all hoses completely
- Hoses should be stored inside the barrel
- After draining the barrel completely, place the rain barrel upside down to avoid water freezing inside it and cracking the barrel

If possible store the rain barrel upside down in a protected area such as a garage, another protected area, or cover the upside down rain barrel to protect it from the elements and avoid the possibility of it blowing away during intense weather.

Due to potential winter ice build up in and around the modified downspout (shortened) while your rain barrel is stored upside down for winter, you may wish to install a flexible downspout extension available at most hardware stores.

WHAT ELSE CAN I DO TO SAVE WATER OUTDOORS?

Here are a few tips to help you save water outside:

- Water only when necessary and according to the municipal by-law. Remember that lawns need less than 10mm of water per week to be healthy (rain included)
- Water in the early morning or late at night to avoid waste due to evaporation
- Group plants according to their water use, to reduce the chance of damage due to over watering
- Use a broom to clean sidewalks and driveways instead of a hose
- When washing your vehicle, use a bucket with soapy water and rinse using a hose with a nozzle to prevent the water from continuously flowing.



NEED MORE INFO

*about downspout disconnection
or rain barrel use?*

Call our Customer Service Representatives
Monday to Friday 8:30 am - 4:30 pm
905-546-4426

or visit our web site at
www.hamilton.ca/water

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