

INFORMATION REGARDING WATER DAMAGES AS A RESULT OF JUNE 19-20, 2009 STORM

Water system: There were no problems involving the public drinking water supply and distribution system. The public water remains safe to drink.

Description of storm event: The Holland area experienced heavy rainfalls that caused flooding of many HBPW customer homes. The Holland area has a separated system with two sewers. The storm sewer is for surface runoff and drainage. The sanitary sewer is for customer sewage placed down their drains.

The storm event caused a lot of surface water to enter the sanitary sewer system which in turn overwhelmed portions of the sanitary sewer system. This is due in part to:

- Private sump pumps illegally connected to the sanitary sewer system
- Aged sections of pipe, both public and private that allow groundwater to enter the system
- Flood waters that entered homes and drained through floor drains connected to the sanitary sewer system.
- Flood waters in streets that entered the sewers through manholes.

Rainwater entered the sanitary sewer system and mixed with sewage.

Power outages occurred at 9 of 35 sewage lift stations, seven of them were west of Old Orchard in Park Township. The HBPW responded immediately to the lift stations with sewage hauling trucks, bypass pumps and portable generators until power was restored. The BPW hauled sewage from the other two affected stations within the city until power was restored. The four largest lift stations located at 8th Street & Fairbanks, 17th & Cleveland, 16th & Crescent, and 8th Street near the Civic Center never lost power and they did not malfunction. The pumps could not keep up with the amount of rainwater that entered the system.

Restoration and cleanup: Since the cause of the flooding was due to the storm and not a malfunctioning sewer, cleaning services will not be provided by the HBPW.

Customers who experienced a flooded basement are advised to do the following:

- Do not enter the water without first knowing that all electrical devices in the flooded areas are secured or powered down.
- Contact your homeowner's or renter's insurance agent and begin a claim process with them.
- Remove the water if possible through the floor drains of the home. If not, remove the water to the nearest ditch or public storm sewer. Do not discharge your water onto adjacent private property creating a problem for your neighbor.
- Arrange for a company to perform cleaning services or begin the cleanup process yourself. Be sure to protect yourself from coming into contact with affected areas by using gloves, eye protection, masks, etc. Wash frequently with anti-bacterial soap. Disinfect areas with bleach solutions or other household cleaning and anti-bacterial solutions.
- Be sure to maintain adequate ventilation in flooded areas to prevent mold and mildew growth.

- Report all storm related structural damage to your local assessor's office as soon as possible. Local jurisdiction contact information can be found [here](#).

Other Resources: Helpful information related to flooded homes and the cleanup process may be found on the Ottawa County Health Department [website](#). Additional information for residents of the City of Holland related to refuse pickup and disposal of damaged items may be found [here](#).

Filing a claim: If you believe the City was negligent and caused the flood to occur in your home, you may file a claim for damages incurred. Claim forms may be picked up at the Holland BPW, the City Clerk's office in City Hall or they may be found [online](#).