



Regarding Seasonal Storms and Related Flooding Frequent Asked Questions (FAQ)

The Chicago region continues to receive record setting rainfall. In 2019, the wettest May on record impacted the area with 8.25 inches of rainfall. This record was broken as of May 19th 2020, with a new record of 8.3 inches for the month of May, with 12 days remaining. Regional and nation-wide trends continue to track increased rainfall amounts, with the United States recording its second-wettest year on record in 2019. Additionally, since precipitation records began in 1871, four of the top five wettest years in Chicago have occurred in the last decade (Chicago Tribune, May 19, 2020).

This FAQ sheet was prepared to provide property owners, residents and business information regarding stormwater drainage matters.

1. My street is flooded during a rainstorm. Why is this happening?

Streets are an important part of the Village's overall Stormwater Management System. Both the storm sewers located below the street, or ditches located along the street and the roadway itself, serve to help direct stormwater into designed locations.

In cases of extreme rain or flash flooding, streets are expected to collect water, in efforts to keep this water from entering homes. This temporary storage of water should usually drain within 30 minutes – 1 hour. If it does not, the storm drain might be blocked by debris. If possible and safe, residents may clear debris to quickly solve the problem. You may also contact Public Works. If the storm drains are not blocked by debris and the street is flooded, the system simply needs some time to catch up. Motorists are advised to never drive through standing water, which may be deeper than originally perceived, and could damage vehicles, put passengers in harm's way, or push water onto properties.

2. I had a sewer backup into my home. Why did this happen and what can be done about this?

As an older community dating back to 1869, Lombard still has some sewers that carry sanitary waste, as well as rainfall runoff, known as "combined" sewers. As streets are reconstructed and as the budget allows, these sewers are replaced with separate storm and sanitary sewers. Roughly one third of Lombard has combined sewers that continue to drain into a downstream combined sewer.

When the capacity of a sanitary or combined sewer is exceeded, water levels may overflow to the ground level and result in a basement backup. A check valve or overhead sewer system (required in all new construction) may prevent backups.

To help assist homeowners, the Village provides an Overhead Sewer Grant Program, which has assisted nearly 400 residents in helping to protect themselves and their homes from sewer backups. Additionally, the Village's

Clear Water Disconnect Grant has contributed to dozens of homes removing sump pumps and downspouts from sanitary sewers, which helps to not overload the system, resulting in reduction of sewer backups.

3. If my sewer backs up, who do I call?

If you experience a sewer backup, call Public Works at (630)620-5740. If it is after 4 p.m., or on a weekend, dial 9-1-1. Do not hesitate to dial 9-1-1 if there is a blocked/flooded roadway, water main break, or any time where you feel or witness something unsafe.

4. Why doesn't the Village replace all of its old combined sewers?

A project of this magnitude is beyond the Village's ability to fund. To replace all of the sanitary sewers at once would cost the Village more than 100 million dollars. To put this into perspective, the Village's General Fund budget for 2020, used to fund core operations from police, fire, public works (excluding water & sewer), community development, finance and responsible planning and administration is \$37.32 million.

The water and sewer fund is collected separately through a \$5 monthly capital fee by water customers, to help fund additional improvements, such as the gradual replacement of combined sewers.

5. I pay property taxes. Why don't you use this money to prevent flooding?

It is important to remember that the Village of Lombard receives less than \$0.08 of each property tax dollar to provide for its core services. (Public safety provided by Police and Fire Departments; forestry, road and water maintenance from Public Works; building and code enforcement from Community Development, and responsible long-term financial planning from the Finance Department.) Lombard's percentage of property taxes is 7.36%, followed by the Helen Plum Library at 5.60%, the Lombard Park District at 5%, DuPage County at 3.79%, and York Township at 1.09%. The majority of property taxes (77.16% or \$0.77 of every dollar) goes to the School Districts.

6. I have standing water in my backyard. Why is it there and how can I fix this?

While flooding of any kind is potentially damaging and dangerous, backyard flooding after a rainstorm can be expected in lower lying areas. Your yard plays an important role in protecting your home from flooding. A properly graded yard can minimize minor drainage problems and prevent more serious flooding conditions. The grading plan for your property may also have been part of an overall stormwater plan for your subdivision.

In general, a properly graded yard will have some or all of the following characteristics:

- Ground sloping away from the house – the ground surrounding your home should be graded away from your house’s foundation to ensure that stormwater flows away from the house and not towards it.
- Pavement sloping away from the house – driveways, sidewalks and patios should be graded away from your house’s foundation to ensure that the stormwater flows away from the house and not towards it.
- Drainage path towards the Village’s Stormwater Management System – stormwater runoff from your yard should have an unobstructed path towards the Village’s system. Many residential properties have swales (ditches) in the side and rear yards which carry water towards inlets within the yard, a neighboring yard, or the street. Some properties are graded such that the stormwater can flow directly into a creek, ditch or basin.

7. What is the Village going to do about standing water in my back yard?

While your local government staff can provide technical guidance, the Village follows the standards and practices of most municipalities and only maintains drainage in public easements or within public roads and rights-of-way.

Maintenance of drainage systems on private property is the responsibility of the respective property owner.

8. Does the Village have any programs or assistance that can help me improve my property?

Yes. To help residents that are impacted by chronic backyard flooding, the Village offers a Backyard Drainage Grant. The grant is available for property owners who have flooding that remains for 72 hours or longer which affects at least two contiguous properties. This grant has been used by more than 50 individuals or resident groups to help improve drainage for areas impacted by standing water.

9. What types of building restrictions are in place to help protect my property?

Construction activity in Lombard is governed by various international, national, county and local codes. Lombard’s Village Codes are administered by the Community Development Department. Violations of Village Codes are handled by the Code Enforcement Division at (630)620-5757.

It is illegal to grade, excavate or fill in any property without a fill and grading permit to ensure that projects do not cause problems for you or your neighbors. Always check with the Community Development Department before you build on, alter, re-grade, or place fill on your property. Report construction or filling without a permit posted to Code Enforcement at (630)620-5757.

10. Can stormwater from my roof gutter be directed to anywhere on my property?

Yes. It is your responsibility, however, to make sure that any downspouts and their runoff are directed away from neighboring properties.

11. Why does the Village allow for new construction on properties that have held water in the past?

Property owners have an inherent right to develop on land they own, provided that they meet code provisions pertaining to zoning, building and stormwater regulations. All new construction requires a building permit. As part of the permit application, the Village will review the required engineering plan to ensure it meets code provisions.

12. Can I block stormwater runoff coming from my neighbor's property?

Illinois Drainage Law precludes the damming or blockage of stormwater runoff from higher properties. However, once on your property, property owners can apply for a grading permit to help address any stormwater runoff concerns.

13. What action has the Village taken to help provide more space for stormwater?

As record setting storms continue to increase in frequency, the Village continues to invest in stormwater management improvements including:

- Pond modifications have gained a total of 26 acre-feet for flood waters: Terrace View Pond (13 ac-ft), Vista Pond (6.5 ac-ft), Morris Pond (4 ac-ft), and Finley/Charles Lane Pond (2.6 ac-ft). This volume is equivalent to filling a football field 24 feet deep.
- The installation of backup generators at all sanitary lift stations, keeping Lombard's 14 sanitary pumping stations operable despite electrical outages.
- Increasing the Village's stormwater pumping capacity by replacing the 40-year-old pump station at Crescent Ave and the East Branch of the DuPage River. In doing so, the pumping rate has increased from 50 to 17-cubic feet per second, until the river reaches its 10-year flood stage, wherein the rate reduces to match the former rate, in order not to worsen flooding along the river itself.

14. What plans does the Village have Village planning to help with ongoing stormwater challenges?

Much of the Village's infrastructure, including underground pipes, are between 50-100 years old. To help address this challenge, the Village will require significant infrastructure improvements over the next 10 years. The Village's Capital Improvement Plan, adopted as part of Lombard's Annual Budget, includes more than \$31 million for sewer improvements and \$14.7 million for water system improvements, over the next 10 years. To help fund these necessary infrastructure improvements, water customers receive a \$5 monthly fixed capital fee on their bills. This capital fee will be used to help make long term improvements to the Village's systems.

On a shorter-term scale, the Village continues to seek out opportunities to expand or establish water detention locations throughout the Village. While we cannot control the amount of water that impacts the Village, we will continue to

plan ahead and to do our part in helping to improve the Village of Lombard for its residents and business owners.

15. Does the Village have a plan of action in response to a large-scale storm or flooding event? If so, what are the qualifications to activate a response?

The Village does have a Storm Debris Management Policy in place. The policy is designed to facilitate and coordinate the removal, collection, and disposal of debris following a severe and large-scale weather disaster. While damaging storms with high winds or flooding are a general hazard for the area, the criteria to trigger a formal response requires a severe impact of weather conditions in a generalized location throughout significant portions of Lombard.

Predetermined thresholds must be met or surpassed before a response plan is triggered. Recent storms, although sadly damaging to some homes, did not reach the minimum threshold in which a localized response can be implemented.

A Localized Response would require:

- Rainfall in excess of a 50-year storm (as defined by 6.46" over 24 hours, 5.95" over 18 hours, or 5.62" over 12 hours) is received in Lombard as measured on the Public Works Department range gauge AND more than 50 but less than 200 homes have debris consisting of building material, personal property, and landscape debris. In this case, the debris management policy will be initiated for residents.
- When storm damage to trees and bushes is realized by more than 50, but less than 200 homes, the property owners must dispose of material in accordance with the Village's Refuse Contract.
- Wind speed at ground level in excess of 50 miles per hour as measured at Glenbard East High School AND more than 50 but less than 200 homes have debris consisting of broken limbs, downed trees or bushes.

A large scale, *Village-wide Response* would require all of the above conditions, with a direct impact on more than 200 homes. In the rare occurrence that a Localized or Village-wide Response is enacted:

- Tree limbs and bushes may be placed on the parkway to be collected and disposed of by Village of Lombard crews, or by contractors hired by the Village.
- Material collection would begin within 72 hours from the end of the storm event. Material placed out after 72 hours would require stickers.
- The Village would provide dumpsters in each affected Trustee District, based upon need.