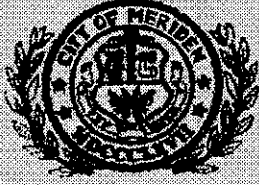


# Meriden Water Pollution Control Facility

Evansville Avenue • So. Meriden, CT 06451

(203) 630-4261



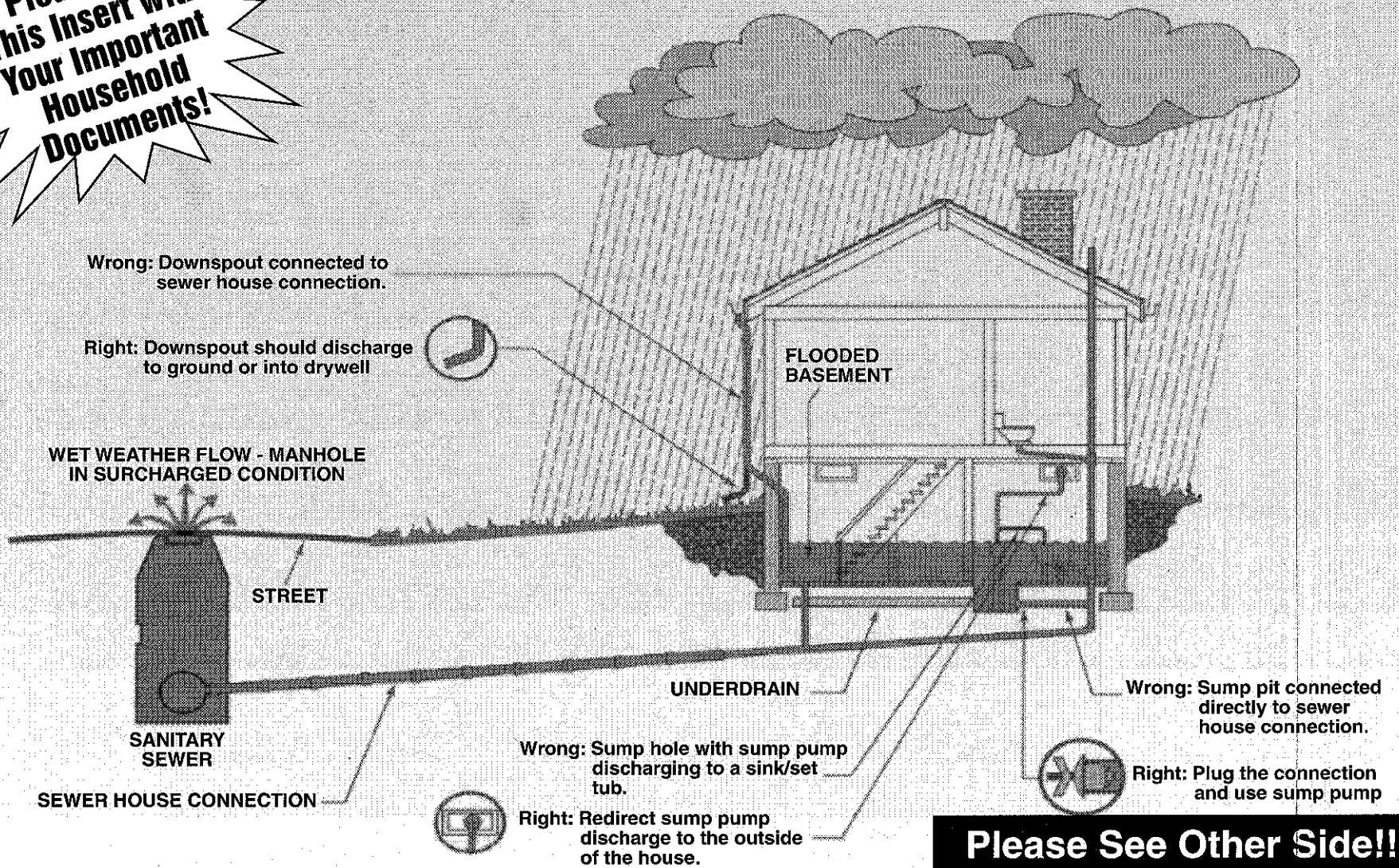
## The Solution to Your Neighbor's Sewer Problems May Be Hiding in Your Basement.

The Meriden Water Pollution Control Facility needs your help - and the help of your neighbors. That's because you may be inadvertently contributing to the surcharging problem by dumping thousands of gallons of groundwater into the Meriden Water Pollution Control Facility sanitary sewer system through sump pump and floor drain connections in your basements.

This insert diagram below will help you determine if your home has these types of connections and what you need to do to disconnect them from the Meriden Water Pollution Control Facility sanitary sewer system. It also provides valuable information on how to prevent or - at the very least - minimize the damage associated with a backup from a blocked sewer, an uncommon, but highly unpleasant occurrence. Thank you for assisting us in controlling our community's sanitary sewer system situation.

Regards.

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Documents!**



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# Questions & Answers About Meriden's Sewer Surcharges & Blockages!

## SURCHARGES

### Q. What is a sewer surcharge?

A. During very wet weather, the main sewers in certain neighborhoods served by the Meriden Water Pollution Control Facility is subject to what is called surcharging. That means that the sewer becomes overloaded from the infiltration of clean water (from storm sewers and infiltrating groundwater) and water from roof leaders (downspouts), footing drains and sump pumps connected to lines designed exclusively for sanitary sewage.

### Q. What can I do to help alleviate surcharging?

A. *The key to surcharge protection is disconnection.* ... If you have a sump pump or foundation drain connected to the sanitary sewer system, you are contributing to the sewer surcharge problem in your neighborhood.

To determine if this is the situation in your house, go to your basement, find your sump pit (the hole in the concrete floor in which the sewer house connection pipe is usually located) and look for the following:

- A sump pump house discharging to a sink/set tub or directly to the sewer house connection. (Typically, the house connection is located in the sump pit in the basement floor; sometimes, it is tied into the waste pipe along a basement wall).
  - Foundation drains connected to the sanitary sewer house connection in your sump pit. (Foundation drains are typically 3" diameter pipes through which groundwater discharges to the sump pit).
- If you've determined that one of these conditions exists at your house, here's what you or your plumber should do:
- If you have a sump pump, remove the discharge hose from the sink/set tub or house connection and redirect it to discharge to the outside of your house (at basement window or through a hole in the foundation wall).

An option to surface discharging of your sump pump maybe to connect the storm sewers. You will have to contact the Meriden Engineering Department at **630-4018** for more information.

## BLOCKAGES

***Blocked sewers can occur anywhere in the City's service area, regardless of weather conditions. While a backup from a sewer, quick and proper action can minimize damage and inconvenience.***

### Q. What do I do if sewage backs up in my home?

A. If sewage backs up in a toilet or basement set tub, and you believe it's the result of a problem outside your house, call the Meriden Water Pollution Control Facility at **203-630-4261**, between 7 am and 3:25 pm weekdays, or the Meriden Police Department at **203-238-1911** after normal business hours and on weekends and holidays.

### **Do not call 911!**

Do not call a plumber until you have first spoken to someone at the Meriden Water Pollution Control Facility.

### Q. Why should I call the WPCF first?

A. The WPCF will immediately send someone to your home to check the main sewer (the large pipe in the middle of the street) for a blockage. If the main is blocked the WPCF will clear it at no expense to you. If you call a plumber before you call the WPCF the plumber's fee will be your responsibility even if the blockage is in the main sewer.

(Just one sump pump running continuously can discharge up to 36,000 gallons of water into the sewer line over a 24-hour period!)

If you're not sure if you're contributing to the surcharge problem, call the Meriden Water Pollution Control Facility (WPCF) at 630-4261 and we'll send an inspector out to determine if you need to disconnect.

Remember: The first step is to determine where the groundwater in your basement is going. If it's being pumped or drained into the sanitary sewer system you're contributing to your neighborhood's surcharge problem. If it's going to the outside of your house, you're already doing your part to help alleviate the sewer discharging.

### Q. Do backwater valves help prevent sewer backups during a surcharge?

A. Yes. A backwater valve is a device consisting of a flapper or swing check that allows sewage or drainage water to flow only in one direction, thus preventing basement fixtures from overflowing when there is a surcharge. The valve, which should be installed by a licensed plumber, is especially important when plumbing fixtures are below grade and for anyone living near low, wet areas that are subject to surcharging. In these areas, a valve should be installed on each basement fixture.

### Q. Is it possible that I already have a backwater valve?

A. Yes. Backwater valves are usually found under the cellar floor, if you have one, we'd be happy to send someone to your home to check. Or call your plumber. If it turns out you already have a backwater valve, periodically maintain it by removing paper and other materials that may prevent the valve from working properly.

## BLOCKAGES

### Q. What if the cause of the backup is not in the main sewer?

A. If the cause of the backup is somewhere in the lateral line that runs from your house to the main sewer, it is the responsibility of the property owner to hire a licensed plumber, sewer cleaner or drain layer to power rod the line to clear the blockage.

### Q. Is the cost of clearing a blockage in the house lateral connection the homeowner's responsibility?

A. Yes. It is the homeowner's responsibility - whether the blockage can be freed by power rodding or a repair is needed. If a repair to the house connection is necessary, the owner must hire a licensed contractor to perform the work, including obtaining a permits from the property City agencies.

In short, any lateral problem that prevents the homeowner's flow from entering the public main line is the homeowner's responsibility, including problems related to the wye and or chimney.

If the Homeowner's lateral has a previous history of root problems, the WPCF should be notified so we may televise the public main line.

### Q. Will a backup valve prevent a back up from a blockage?

A. Yes. While blockages are far less predictable than sewer surcharges, the end result is essentially the same: sewage in your basement. A backwater valve will prevent backups by allowing sewage to only flow in one direction (out from your home).

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**Please See Other Side!**