

Lower Salford Township Authority – Vent Cap/Vent Riser Repair Program

Dear Resident:

This letter serves as notification that the Lower Salford Township Authority has a comprehensive plan to identify and reduce inflow and infiltration (I & I) into the sanitary sewer system. Inflow and infiltration is a result of groundwater or rainwater entering the sanitary sewer system which may contribute to an overload condition of the current Treatment Plants. Left unchecked, I & I will overburden a Treatment Plant which results in overflows, costly expansions or replacement of the Plant. In addition, the Authority may be subject to fines from the Department of Environmental Protection if we are not able to comply with the department's requirements as a result of treating the I & I.

There are two areas in which the property owner can assist in the reduction of inflow and infiltration. Inflow is the result of illegal connections which directly discharges surface water or groundwater into the sanitary sewer system. Such connections include water from roof or cellar drains, springs, sump pumps and French drains. Please note that The Lower Salford Township Ordinance Section #135-7 as amended 3-20-2003 states: "It is prohibited to discharge the following into the Lower Salford Township Authority's sanitary sewer system: Clean surface water or groundwater, including water from the roof or cellar drains, springs, sump pumps and French drains. Violations may result in fines up to \$1,000". It is not the Authority's intention to impose such a fine; rather the goal is to have the illegal connections disconnected from the sanitary sewer. If your property is not presently in compliance, please take immediate steps to remove the illegal discharges from the Authority's system. If you have any questions regarding whether your property is in compliance with the township ordinance, please contact the Authority at 215-256-6127. Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

Infiltration is the result of surface and groundwater entering the sanitary sewer system through cracked or leaking private sewer laterals, low or cracked vent risers and missing vent riser caps. Each of these items is the responsibility of the property owner to repair and maintain.

As a part of the comprehensive plan to reduce the amount of I & I and to assist the property owner, the Lower Salford Township Authority has implemented a vent cap and vent riser repair program. Current specifications require that the top of the vent cap must be raised 6 inches above grade to eliminate the possibility of groundwater from entering the sewer system through the vent. The program guidelines allow for the Authority to replace the missing vent cap, however, the repair of a cracked vent riser located above grade, or the need to extend the vent riser to be compliant with the current specifications is the responsibility of the property owner.

Once the repairs are completed, the property owner will contact the Authority to schedule an inspection by our personnel of the repairs made. The continued maintenance and repairs to the vent cap and vent riser are the responsibility of the homeowner. If the Authority finds that the vent cap and or vent riser have been modified subsequent to the repair and is no longer in compliance; the property owner will be responsible for the repair and may be subject to a fine.

Please review the attached information and contact the Authority at 215-256-6127 should you have any questions.

Questions & Answer about Inflow and Infiltration?

What is Inflow and Infiltration?

Inflow and infiltration (I & I) creates a major problem within the sanitary sewer collection, conveyance, and treatment system. I & I is the introduction of water, other than domestic sanitary waste, that is normally not present in the system such as rain and/or surface water from various sources.

Infiltration is the surface and ground water which leaks into the sanitary sewer lines. During a rainfall event, the quantity of the I & I will be many times the normal sewage flow. Frequently, during heavy rainfall events, the I & I can substantially increase the flow to the treatment plant. The sanitary sewers must carry this increased flow and the treatment plant must be capable of treating the additional flows while maintaining compliance according to the Department of Environmental Protection's requirements.

What are Illegal Connections to the Sanitary Sewer?

Inflow is water that is directly connected to the sanitary sewer system from clean surface water or groundwater, including water from the roof or cellar drains, springs, sump pumps and French drains. This type of connection was more than likely intentionally performed. However, these types of connections to the sanitary sewer system are illegal and may result in fines up to \$1,000.

What is a Vent Cap?

A vent cap is either a plastic, cast iron slotted cap or solid plastic threaded screw cap installed on a vent riser. The top of the vent cap must be raised 6 inches above grade to eliminate the possibility of water from entering the sanitary sewer system through the vent.

What is a Low Vent?

A low vent is a vent riser which top is below grade or at ground level. The ground around the low vent could act as a drain directing surface water from a large area into the sewer system. This inflow of water will contribute to overload conditions at the treatment plant during rain events.

Who is responsible to maintain the vent cap and vent riser?

The property owner is responsible for the maintenance and repairs to the vent cap, vent riser and sewer lateral.

Why is this important to homeowners and the Sewer Authority?

If a cap is missing or damaged, rodents, dirt and other debris can enter the sewer lateral causing blockages and expensive repairs to the homeowner. Adversely, if the caps are missing and allow ground and rainwater to enter the sewers, the Authority's treatment plants may become overloaded during rain events. The solution is to fix the problem at the source rather than spend funds unnecessarily to overbuild the treatment plants.

What does the Authority do to prevent Inflow & Infiltration?

In order to identify the sources of I & I, the Lower Salford Township Authority routinely televise the sanitary sewer main lines and inspect sanitary sewer manholes. Where possible, the Authority staff will complete minor repairs. When necessary, capital expenditures are included in the annual budget to repair or replace the main sewer lines. If left uncontrolled, I & I could result in an expensive construction project, thereby increasing the rates charged for service.