

Skyline Neighborly News

Thoughts to help you solve your water problem when there has been too much rain and water flow



When you are thinking about the next heavy rain, what could you do to improve your chances of no water in your basement?

Take a walk around the exterior areas of your property, consider taking some of the following actions:

- Routinely clean and maintain gutters and downspouts so that rainwater from your roof flows easily away from your house. Also, make sure any drainage ditches or storm drains are clear of debris and functioning properly.
 - Improve lot grading. Determine how water flows or accumulates around your home to identify potential trouble spots. (Watch for these during an average rainstorm) Stormwater should always drain away from the building; if necessary, change your landscaping to improve runoff. This could include building up any sunken areas around the foundation, digging small depressions to properly channel water, and generally improving the yard so that it slopes away from your home.
 - Install a rain barrel. A rain barrel is an alternative method of dealing with rain water. They are typically connected to gutter downspouts and collect the runoff from roofs. You can use this water to store water for non-potable uses such as watering the lawn and garden.
 - Clear leaves in the fall to prevent obstruction of drains, waterpaths and gutters.
 - If you have footing drains or exit lines consider having them cleaned out. Time and construction can cause damage to these lines and may need repair. A local plumber or contractor could help you with this.
 - Have a backup sump pump and battery back up for your pumps. Some people have two sump pumps in the sump pits to handle the excess volume.
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Home Water Damage Claim Tips

Water damage gets worse with time. So it's important to contact your insurance company immediately. When you call, have your policy number ready and be prepared to provide the following information:

- A description of what happened
- A description of the damage to your property
- A phone number where you can be reached throughout the claim process
- Contact information or remediation services you may have hired

A claims professional will be in touch with you promptly to estimate your damage and schedule an on-site inspection. Many insurance companies also provide these additional services:

- Arrange for temporary housing if your home is seriously damaged
- Referrals to a remediation service to help mitigate the water damage to your home
- Referrals to contractor or roof repairer
- Help create an itemized list of damage or loss to personal belongings.



Garden Plants And Trees That Naturally Control Water Runoff

Rain gardens are an excellent way to manage water runoff in your yard. These gardens use native plants that help absorb excess moisture, reduce flooding, and prevent soil erosion. The plants we have listed here are well-suited to thrive in wet conditions and naturally assist in controlling runoff. You can create a functional, aesthetically pleasing garden by incorporating these plants. Additionally, these plants support pollinators and help improve water quality in your landscape.

- **Blackeyed Susan** - The variety named *Rudbeckia fulgida* thrives in moist conditions. This variety has deep roots that help absorb excess water, reducing runoff and stabilizing the soil to prevent erosion. With its resilience and beauty, *Rudbeckia fulgida* is perfect for gardens that require moisture-loving plants.
- **Blue Flag Iris (*Iris versicolor*)** - Blue Flag Iris is a stunning plant that thrives in wet soils, making it an excellent choice for areas with standing water. Its roots absorb excess moisture, reducing runoff and stabilizing the soil, which helps prevent erosion.
- **Joe Pye Weed (*Eutrochium purpureum*)** - Joe Pye Weed is a tall perennial that thrives in moist, well-drained soils. Its deep roots absorb excess moisture, reducing runoff and preventing soil erosion.

A few other plants that are helpful in soaking up water are:

- **Purple Coneflower**
- **Bee Balm and Most Mint Family Plants**
- **Yarrow**
- **Sunflowers**
- **Daylilies**
- **Hostas**
- **Zinnias**



What Kind of Trees Absorb Water?

- **Cypress**

While cypress trees are native to southern climates, they're adaptable in many other climates. Cypress trees can grow in USDA plant hardiness zones 4 through 10. These types of trees are very suitable for wet areas. Light sandy or loamy soil is ideal. Cypress trees perform best in full sun but can tolerate partial shade.

- **River Birch**

- The river birch grows relatively quickly, helping it rise in popularity. Its bark is unique with its curling appearance. The somewhat triangular leaves are glossy and green with a length between 2 and 3 inches. The typical height for river birch trees is between 40 and 70 feet in height. Its Latin name is *Betula nigra*

- **Black Maple**

At maturity, the deciduous black maple can reach a height between 60 and 80 feet. You'll definitely enjoy the fall color with this tree's leaves. The bark can be grayish brown or grayish black. The leaves are 3-lobed and 4 to 6 inches long and wide. Its Latin name is *Acer nigrum*. The black maple can grow in a wide variety of soil conditions, but most commonly in moist soils. Plant this maple in a spot that receives full sunlight. You can tap this tree to create syrup from its sap!

- **Serviceberry**

The serviceberry tree shows off for 3 full seasons: snow white flowers in the spring, bright edible berries in the summer, and fiery colors in the fall. There are a few varieties of this tree, meaning their heights range from 4 feet to 40 feet. The tree is hardy in USDA plant hardiness zones 4 through 8, and even down to zone 2 sometimes.

- **Green Ash**

The green ash makes for an excellent shade tree. At maturity, the green ash can reach a height between 50 and 60 feet with a spread around 25 feet.

Water Management Ideas for Homeowners

How to Improve Drainage Around the House

Improving drainage around a house is a fundamental aspect of property maintenance that safeguards the home's structural stability. Water is the primary agent of destruction for residential foundations, and managing its flow prevents costly, long-term damage. Uncontrolled moisture saturation of the soil surrounding the foundation leads to expansion and contraction, placing stress on structural components. Proper drainage mitigates hydrostatic pressure against basement walls and prevents water from migrating into crawl spaces or basements, reducing the likelihood of mold, mildew, and wood rot.

Recognizing Common Drainage Problems

Homeowners can diagnose drainage issues by observing specific symptoms that manifest both indoors and outdoors. Persistent standing water or pooling near the foundation hours after a rain event is a clear sign that water is not being directed away efficiently. A constantly soggy lawn or areas of eroded landscaping mulch close to the house perimeter also indicate a failure in surface water management.

Inside the home, a drainage problem often presents as moisture intrusion in the lowest levels of the structure. Visible water stains, efflorescence—the white, powdery mineral deposits on concrete basement walls—or a persistent musty odor in the basement or crawl space all point to excessive moisture accumulation. Visible cracks in the foundation or basement walls can be symptoms of soil movement caused by cycles of saturation and drying, which puts lateral pressure on the structure.

Managing Water Flow at the Surface Level

The first and most effective line of defense against water damage involves controlling the flow of water on the surface before it has a chance to soak into the ground near the foundation. This requires diligent maintenance of the gutter system, which is designed to channel a significant volume of roof runoff away from the house. Gutters must be kept clear of debris, angled slightly toward the downspouts, and securely fastened to ensure they function optimally during heavy rainfall.

Gutter and Downspout Management

The termination point of a downspout is particularly important because it concentrates a large volume of water in one location. To prevent this concentrated flow from saturating the soil right next to the foundation, downspout extensions are necessary. These extensions should direct water at least 6 to 10 feet away from the foundation wall to ensure the water disperses over a wider area. Homeowners can use simple, inexpensive plastic extensions or opt for buried systems that carry the water further out into the yard or to a storm drain.

Proper Grading

Equally important is ensuring the ground slopes away from the structure, a process known as grading. The soil surrounding the house should fall at a slope of approximately 6 inches over the first 10 feet of distance, creating a gradient that encourages surface water runoff. If the existing grade is flat or slopes toward the foundation, soil must be added and compacted to achieve this pitch. Maintaining this slope prevents water from collecting alongside the foundation, where it could easily infiltrate basements or cause soil pressure issues.

Subsurface Drainage Systems

When surface solutions are insufficient to manage groundwater or soil saturation, subsurface drainage systems provide a permanent solution by managing water that has already penetrated the soil. These systems are designed to collect and redirect underground water away from the foundation walls using gravity or mechanical pumping.

French Drains

A French drain is a trench system designed to intercept and divert both surface water and groundwater before it reaches a protected area. It consists of a trench filled with gravel, containing a perforated pipe wrapped in a filter fabric. This system is typically installed in areas of a yard that are perpetually soggy, or uphill from a structure to intercept water flowing down a slope. The fabric prevents fine soil particles from clogging the pipe, allowing water to enter the perforations and be channeled away from the area of concern.

Foundation Drains (Weeping Tile)

Foundation drains, often referred to as weeping tile or drain tile, serve a specific function by protecting the integrity of the basement or crawl space walls. This perforated piping is installed deep in the ground, typically around the exterior perimeter of the foundation footing. Its purpose is to collect groundwater and relieve hydrostatic pressure—the lateral force exerted by saturated soil—against the basement wall. The collected water is routed to a collection point, such as a sump pit, where an electric sump pump expels the water out and away from the house.

8 Step guide to improving residential roof drainage

Spot early warning signs of drainage issues, such as pooling water or overflowing gutters

- Follow an 8-step guide to improving residential roof drainage, from clearing debris to scheduling regular maintenance
- Learn DIY dos and don'ts to avoid common mistakes in drainage maintenance and repairs

Recognizing the Need for Better Drainage

Noticing issues with residential roof drainage can often be subtle, but early detection is key to preventing major damage. One common sign is pooling water on your roof, which not only indicates poor drainage but also can lead to leaks and structural weakness. Similarly, if you observe gutters overflowing during heavy rains, it's a clear signal that your drainage is inadequate and could be compromised by blockages. Moreover, watermarks on your exterior walls suggest that water is not being channeled away effectively, potentially leading to decay and mold growth.

Addressing Gutter Blockages Early

The gutters and downspouts are your first line of defense against roof water damage, and their maintenance should never be neglected. Over time, they can become clogged with leaves, twigs, and debris, hindering water flow and increasing the risk of overflow and subsequent damage to your property. A backed-up gutter system is more than just an inconvenience; it exerts unnecessary weight on your roof structure, which can cause sagging and cracks. Regular inspection and cleaning are essential to maintaining the health of your roof and ensuring it can withstand the elements.

Ensuring Proper Water Flow Through Slope and Guards

An often-overlooked aspect of gutter maintenance is the sloping that directs the water toward downspouts. Without the correct angle, water will stagnate, promoting rust and corrosion in your gutters. Additionally, installing gutter guards can be a game-changer; these devices keep out debris to ensure a clear pathway for rainwater, effectively reducing maintenance needs and extending the life of your drainage system. Remember to **check your gutters** are correctly installed with a gentle slope toward the downspouts to prevent potential issues before they arise.

Step-by-Step Guide to Fixing Common Roof Drainage Issues

Ineffective drainage can compromise the integrity of your home, making it crucial to address any issues promptly. Start by **examining your roof's flashing**; it's often the unsung hero that keeps water from seeping through vulnerable areas. If you find any damage, acting quickly to repair or replace it is vital to prevent moisture intrusion, which can lead to costly repairs. It's also smart to **redirect the downspouts** so that they channel water away from your foundation, preventing potential water damage to your home's structure.

Maintaining Your Drainage System for Longevity

As homeowners, one of the best practices you can adopt for roof maintenance is the installation of gutter guards. Not only do they preserve the cleanliness of your gutters, but they also enhance the overall efficacy of your roof's drainage system. Additionally, considering extra measures like underground drain pipes or catch basins can significantly improve your rooftop water management, especially in regions with heavy rainfall. To learn more about protecting and maintaining your roof, consider the expert services offered by Platinum Roofing and Retro-Fit; you can find additional information and resources by following this [link](#) to their comprehensive roofing solutions.

Step 1: Evaluate Your Current Drainage System

Begin by assessing the existing roof drainage infrastructure at your residential property. Look for signs of pooling water, overflowing gutters, or watermarks on exterior walls.

Step 2: Clear Debris from Gutters and Downspouts

Regularly clean out leaves, twigs, and other debris that can clog your gutters and downspouts. Blocked drainage can lead to water backing up and damaging your roof.

Step 3: Ensure Proper Gutter Sloping

Gutters should slope towards the downspouts to facilitate water flow. Check that your gutters are installed correctly, with a slight angle leading to the downspouts.

Step 4: Install Gutter Guards

Consider adding gutter guards to prevent debris from entering the gutter system. This will help maintain clear pathways for rainwater to be diverted away from your roof.

Step 5: Inspect and Repair Roof Flashing

Examine the flashing around chimneys, vents, and roof joints. Any damaged or missing flashing should be repaired or replaced to prevent water from seeping into the roof structure.

Step 6: Redirect Downspouts for Optimal Drainage

Position downspouts so that they direct water away from your home's foundation. Extensions or splash blocks can be used to guide the water to a safe drainage area.

Step 7: Consider Installing Additional Drainage Solutions

For more complex drainage issues, look into installing French drains, catch basins, or underground drain pipes to further manage water runoff.

Step 8: Schedule Regular Roof and Drainage System Maintenance

Finally, set up a routine maintenance schedule for your roof and its drainage system. Regular inspections and preventative measures can extend the lifespan of your roof and prevent costly damages.

Avoiding Common DIY Mistakes in Residential Roof Drainage

When it comes to residential roof drainage solutions, well-intentioned DIY efforts can sometimes lead to more harm than good. Missteps during installation or maintenance of your roof's drainage system can lead to critical issues that could have been avoided. Understanding these common blunders and how to steer clear of them can save your roof from unnecessary damage and ensure effective water management.

Mistake 1: Neglecting Regular Inspections

Many homeowners forget the significance of routine inspections until problems become visible, and often by then, it's too late. Regular checks can detect minor issues before they escalate into major ones, such as a small leak leading to extensive water damage or mold growth.

Mistake 2: Incorrect Gutter Sloping

Gutters without the proper slope can't effectively channel water to the downspouts, which can cause water to pool and overflow. Ensure gutters are installed with a slight decline towards downspouts to facilitate the flow and prevent stagnant water.

Mistake 3: Overlooking Gutter Capacity

A common oversight is not matching the gutter size and capacity with the volume of runoff your roof generates. Consider factors like your roof's size and the amount of rainfall your area receives when choosing your gutter system to avoid overflows during heavy showers.

Mistake 4: DIY-Installing Gutter Guards Improperly

While gutter guards are advantageous, incorrect installation can lead to new problems, such as improper fit leading to debris entering the gutters. Always follow manufacturer instructions closely or seek professional help to ensure your gutter guards are effective in keeping out leaves and twigs.

Mistake 5: Poorly Positioned Downspouts

Downspouts misdirecting water towards the foundation can lead to serious structural issues. Make sure downspouts extend sufficiently away from the foundation, utilizing extenders if necessary, to prevent water from accumulating close to your home.

Mistake 6: Delayed Flashing Repairs

Ignoring damaged or worn-out flashing can cause water to infiltrate the roof substrate and inside your home. Inspection and prompt repair or replacement of roof flashing should be a priority to maintain an intact drainage system.

Mistake 7: Forgoing Professional Advice

Lastly, taking on complex drainage projects without sufficient knowledge can result in flawed installations. Don't hesitate to consult with professionals when planning out advanced solutions like French drains or for regular maintenance checks.

Regular Maintenance: The Key to Long-Lasting Roof Drainage

Setting up a regular maintenance schedule for your roof and drainage system is one foundational practice every homeowner should adopt. This not only ensures that all components are functioning properly but also helps in spotting potential issues before they escalate into serious problems. **Consistent upkeep** also extends the lifespan of your roofing materials, saving you money and headache in the long term.

When To Seek Professional Help

While many drainage issues can be handled through diligent maintenance, there are times when professional assessment is necessary. Complex drainage problems require expert analysis to prevent repetitive or extensive damage. If unsure about the condition of your roof or its drainage capacity, contacting a specialist in **residential roof drainage solutions** is a smart and safe step to take.

Read Your Lot Like Water Does

Watch how rain moves across your property during a storm. Note where sheets of water collect, where soil stays soggy, and where bare spots erode. Sketch the flows so you fix paths rather than symptoms.

Check how neighbors and sidewalks affect runoff patterns. Shared fences and driveways can redirect water in surprising ways. If a low spot sits on a boundary, plan a solution that does not shift the problem next door.

Look for roof valleys and large hardscape that concentrate flow. These create fast channels that overwhelm weak points. Flag them as priorities before you add features elsewhere.

Size And Place Gutters And Downspouts

Gutters are your roof's first defense against runoff. Your roof moves a lot of water each hour - careful planning for [roofing & gutters](#) keeps that flow from dumping along the foundation and pushing into walls. Make sure downspouts land on splash blocks or drain lines that carry water to daylight.

Check that gutters are pitched slightly toward outlets. Hangers should be tight, and seams should not drip under steady rain. If water overshoots at valleys, add splash guards or a larger outlet.

Long gutter runs may need another downspout. Splitting the load reduces backups in heavy storms. Where space is tight, consider a short buried extension that connects to a safe outlet.

Get The Grade Right Around The House

Start at the foundation. The first 10 feet should fall steadily away so water cannot sit against walls. Use a long level or taut string to confirm the slope and add soil where it is flat.

A building science guide advises sloping permeable surfaces roughly 0.5 inch per foot for those 10 feet, which helps keep basements and crawlspaces dry. Rake in stages and compact lightly so the grade holds after the first rain. Finish with topsoil and mulch to limit erosion.

Revisit edges after [big storms](#). If puddles reappear, add soil in thin lifts instead of one big dump. Blend new soil into the lawn so water sheds smoothly.

Use Rain Gardens To Slow And Soak

When long downspout extensions are not practical, capture water in a shallow basin. A rain garden holds runoff temporarily while it infiltrates into amended soil. Place it downslope from the source and at least a few feet from foundations.

An EPA program explains that rain gardens can be sited, designed, and maintained with basic tools, and they reduce polluted runoff while adding native habitat. Start with a simple oval depression lined with compost-rich soil. Size it for a typical storm in your area.

Plant deep-rooted natives that handle both wet and dry spells. Put taller plants in the center and shorter ones near the rim. Mulch 2 to 3 inches to limit weeds and spread overflow gently.

Choose Permeable Surfaces

- Replace solid strips with open-joint pavers so rain seeps into the base instead of racing to the street.

- Use gravel shoulders along driveways to catch splash and reduce puddles near edges.
- For patios, set flagstone in gravel with wide joints rather than a solid slab.

Direct Surface Flow With Small Features

A shallow swale can guide sheet flow across the lawn without looking like a ditch. Keep the bottom smooth so water spreads rather than cuts. Line only the inlet and outlet with stone if erosion starts.

Along fences and tight side yards, a ribbon of river rock prevents ruts. It also slows water so it drops sediment before reaching drains. Keep landscape fabric out of the top layer so the rock stays permeable.

Where water must cross a path, add a simple channel drain. Tie it into your outflow route instead of letting it dump at the edge. Clean the grate after storms to maintain capacity.

Quick Checks After Big Storms

- Clear leaves from gutter outlets and downspout elbows, then confirm water reaches the intended outlet.
- Rake mulch back into beds, top up low spots at the foundation, and smooth any eroded swales.
- Skim sediment from rain garden inlets and refresh compost on bare patches.

What The Experts Emphasize

Get the grade right first and most problems shrink. A steady fall away from the house protects foundations and makes every other feature work better. Recheck the slope after the first heavy rain and tune it where water lingers.

Then capture and clean what you can on site. A rain garden turns problem runoff into a small habitat while easing the load on drains. Keep plantings simple at first and expand once the basin proves itself.

These two ideas reinforce each other. Direct water away from walls, then give it a place to soak. With a few well-placed adjustments and simple maintenance, your home will handle everyday storms without drama.