

SUMP PUMP DISCHARGE:

The discharge of sump pump water that crosses city sidewalks or streets can create a public nuisance. In time the discharge can cause algae growth in warm weather and icing conditions in freezing weather. In each case the property owner is responsible for any accidents that may occur and redirecting of the discharge is required.



The following basic requirements govern the discharge of water from residential sump pumps:

- Discharges cannot create a public nuisance (algae build-up on streets or sidewalks, ice build-up on streets or sidewalks, hazardous conditions (ponding) on streets or sidewalks, etc.).
- Discharges cannot be discharged to a sanitary sewer or to a floor drain.

The volume of water that accumulates in sump pits varies significantly from house to house and across the city. Most sump pumps discharge occasionally and more frequently during wet weather, however, in some situations sump pumps discharge on a regular basis regardless of the weather conditions. Pumps that discharge on a more frequent basis can cause a variety of problems.

In locations with frequent discharges they can create a public nuisance where the water flows across public sidewalks, drives, and streets in-route to the storm sewer or other approved discharge point. Where these discharges result in the growth of algae or mold on sidewalks or streets they create slip hazards to pedestrians and bicycles. In cold and freezing weather the discharges can freeze causing ice accumulation creating additional hazards for pedestrians and vehicles.

When the accumulation of ice or algae creates hazards to the public that are not readily dissipated from the normal weather changes they are considered public nuisances and must be abated within a reasonable period of time.

Suggested possible solutions for controlling sump pump discharge nuisances

Back yard

Direct the discharge to the back yard where it can harmlessly dissipate or soak into the ground. When the back yard has enough slope to provide a drainage swale at the rear of the lot, the sump pump discharge may be extended toward the rear of the lot. The drainage will flow along the drainage swales and dissipate before draining into the street. Frequently move the sump pump hose around the yard to avoid problem or nuisance wet areas.

Connection to the public storm sewer system

When the discharges from sump pumps occur on the same side of the street as the public storm sewer, the property owner (or group of property owners) may extend the sump pump discharge pipes directly into the adjacent drain tile, storm sewer pipe, or nearby intake. When connecting to the public storm sewer system, the City of Council Bluffs Engineering Division must be contacted first for proper approval and permitting.

Rain gardens/bio-retention cells

Rain gardens are small depressed garden areas filled with moisture loving plants. Sump pump discharge can be directed to these areas to facilitate infiltration.