

FAIRLINGTON MEADOWS
Board of Directors
2006

Basement Flooding Procedures

Fairlington Meadows was built in the early 1940's. The units are solidly built but, like all old buildings (and some new ones), they have settled and the foundations and floors have developed some cracking. As some of us experienced on June 25th 2006 and in years past, when we get heavy downpours of rain, the hydrostatic pressure of the built-up water in and on the ground will force water through those cracks and cause groundwater flooding in the basements.

Another problem that we have encountered is the inability of the County's storm water piping system in parts of Fairlington to drain the streets, parking lots and storm drains fast enough when we get heavy rains. The storm water pipes are of small diameter and can only pass a fixed amount of water at any given time. This means that some of our parking courts and low lying areas will flood. The flooding recedes once the rain stops and the water can drain away.

As we have said a number of times over the past four years, some of our sanitary sewer lines have cracks and breaks and we are in the process of repairing and relining these lines. We have fixed some of the worst lines already and will continue to repair and reline the laterals until they are all done. This is an extremely expensive capital improvement program and it will take us three to four years to complete. Ground water can infiltrate our sanitary sewer laterals and, if the hydro-static pressure is great enough, it will cause sewage to back up into the units.

In May 2004, the Board of Directors passed and distributed a policy resolution called, "**Responsibilities for Flood Damage, Repair, Clean-up and Property Replacement (No. 03-30-04).**" The resolution can be found on this website and it is the responsibility of each homeowner to be familiar with it.

In quick summary it says, if sewage backs up into a unit as a result of problems with the common elements (sewer laterals), the Association will pay for: emergency plumbing services and initial clean-up of the affected family unit including disinfection procedures. *The unit owner is responsible for everything e/se.* The Association will **not** pay for anything related to flooding as a result of ground water penetration through the basement windows, utility penetrations, foundation walls or floors. The policy resolution provides the details.

The following pages provide some tips and procedural advice that may help you minimize the impact of heavy rains and flooding.

BEFORE THE STORM

- **Make sure you have adequate H06 Insurance coverage if you are a unit owner and H04 coverage if you are a renter.** Fairlington Meadows does not provide individual unit owner insurance coverage. An insurance info paper can also be found on this website.
- Make sure your storm windows are down and tight. The upper window should project further out from the building face than the lower window.
- Clear debris and paint from the “drain holes” in the bottom portion of your window frames. These holes allow water that gets into the sills to drain out.
- Make sure your downspout drain pipes are connected to the pipes that drain the water away from the building. If you don’t have drain pipe extenders, we can provide them to you (give Jack a call) or you can buy black flexible tubing at any home center.
- Put covers over your window wells. They are available at home centers and can make a big difference. Make sure they are weighted down if high winds are expected.
- Make sure that mulch in the flower beds along the perimeter of your building does not trap water against the sides of the walls. Just pull the mulch away to allow drainage away from the building.
- Move valuables out of the basement and move as many items as possible off the basement floors. Put furniture up on blocks.
- Unplug your clothes washer & dryer and all other lights and appliances.
- Have your plumber’s number ready. Here’s a few water extraction companies:
 - **Roberts Restoration (formerly Serve Pro)** **703-629-0577**
 - **Service Master** **703-212-7000**
 - **Belfor** **800-421-4106****Also – Arlington County Sewer & Water Authority** **703-228-6525**
CMC Emergency Number **301-446-2635**
CMC Regular Business Number **703-631-7200**
- If you park in an area that is subject to flooding, move your car to someplace else.
- If you can’t be home during the storm, make sure someone has your house keys and will check on your unit from time to time.
- Have your wet-dry vac out and ready to operate. Have plenty of rubber gloves, towels, mops and buckets handy.

IF YOU GET FLOODED

- Call a plumber and/or a water extraction company as soon as you can. Their “wait lists” fill up fast. Call your insurance company as soon as possible. Call CMC to report the flooding. Remember our emergency number quickly gets overwhelmed during big storms.
- During the storm, **Do not use your water system** (sinks, tubs, showers and toilets). Any waste-water from your unit just adds to the drainage and flooding problems.
- Do everything you can to **HELP YOURSELF**.

- Protect yourself:
 - If the water gets too high in the basement, it will hit the electrical outlets and this could be very dangerous.
 - Handling rainwater is relatively safe but backed up sewage is not. Avoid direct contact with sewage water. Always use rubber gloves.
 - Flooding tends to cause people to panic. Take your time and be careful when moving heavy items. Conduct your interactions with service providers in a professional manner.

AFTER THE FLOOD WATER HAS RECEDED

- If there was sewage infiltration, be careful during clean up.
- Keep the air moving as much as possible with the use of as many fans as you can get. This will facilitate dry-out and will reduce the chances of mold developing.
- You must pay the plumber and any other emergency service provider. There is no direct billing to the Association.
- Call your homeowner insurance agent. If you had sewage infiltration, call Jack Clark (shop number is 703-820-6799) and he will come to your place for validation so you can file a claim for emergency plumbing services and initial clean-up with the Association (via CMC).
- Have your water extraction company remove damaged carpets, padding and other wet trash from the Meadows premises. Minimize the amount of trash that is put out at the curb.