

CSO Information Page

What is a CSO?

Combined Sewer Overflow

What is a combined sewer system?

A combined sewer system has pipes that collect both storm water runoff and sanitary sewage. Combined sewers have existed in Findlay since the late 1800's and at that time all combined sewers drained directly or indirectly to the Blanchard River. It was not until the early 1930's that Findlay constructed a wastewater treatment facility.

Some of these early combined sewers are still in use today. During dry weather these combined sewers transport wastewater directly to the sewage treatment facility. In periods of heavy rainfall or excessive snow melt, the wastewater volume in a combined sewer system can exceed the capacity of the sewer system or treatment facility. For this reason, combined sewer systems are designed to overflow occasionally and discharge excess wastewater directly to the Blanchard river or its tributaries. With these overflows pressure is relieved from the sewer system thus helping to prevent back-ups in basements. These overflows are called CSOs.

Does the City of Findlay have CSOs? Do they overflow?

Yes, occasionally.

What is the City doing to control discharges from CSOs?

The City expanded your wastewater treatment facility in 2001 to be able to handle around 37 MGD (million gallons per day). Previously the treatment facilities would only handle around 19 MGD during storm events. During this expansion several new trunk sewers were installed throughout the City and an additional pump station was constructed at Bright Road and East Sandusky Street. The new sewers help take wastewater out of the old

combined sewer system thus reducing the amount of CSO discharges. Total cost for these improvements was 32 million dollars.

The City has an on going program to prevent river intrusion during high river elevation (flooding). This intrusion will diminish the amount of storage in the sewer system during storm events. This program consists of installing flap gates or back flow prevention devices on outlets into the river and local creeks. In addition manhole dishes which prevent water from entering the sanitary system when the manholes are under water during flooding were installed in areas within the 100 year flood plain.

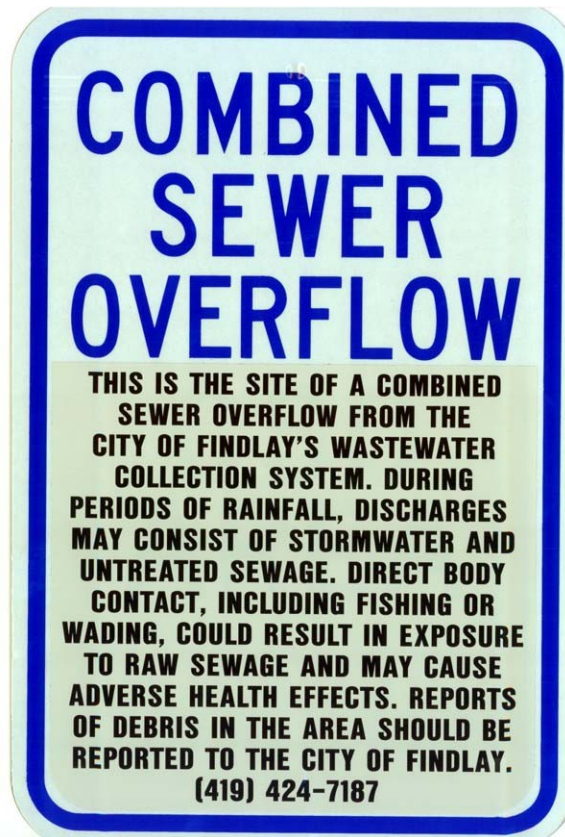
Separate from this program is the City's downspout and sump pump program. The purpose of this program is to eliminate clean water connections into the sanitary sewer system. These clean water connections (sump pumps and roof downspouts) put storm water into the sanitary sewer system at a rate that is much higher than the sewers are designed for and cause back-ups and overflows.

The City has a CSO operational plan which has been approved by the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) which has nine control strategies which can reduce the frequency of discharges and minimize capital expenditures. These nine controls are:

- 1) Proper operation and regular maintenance of the sewer system and CSOs.
- 2) Maximum use of the collection system for storage.
- 3) Review and modification of pretreatment requirements.
- 4) Maximize flow at the treatment facility.
- 5) Prohibition of dry weather overflows.
- 6) Control of solid and floatable materials in CSO discharges.
- 7) Require pollution prevention programs focused on reducing the level of contaminants in CSOs.
- 8) Required inspection, monitoring and reporting of CSOs.
- 9) Public notification for any areas affected by CSOs.

How will I know where the overflow points are located in the City?

Signs are posted near all overflow points alerting the public that this is the location of a CSO outfall. This means that the potential for an overflow could exist during heavy rains.



How long should I avoid contact with the water after a overflow?

There are several factors that affect the length of time. The amount of impurities that were introduced during the overflow, water levels and temperatures (hot weather) are your major factors. It is generally good advice to stay away from the discharge points (no swimming or contact with the water) for several days .