



TOPIC: Updated Sewer Use By-law

DATE: June 2016

What is the Sewer Use By-law?

Vaughan's Sewer Use By-law regulates substances released into the City's sewer system, and enforces defined limits on substances such as pH, fat, oil, grease and suspended solids. A detailed list of substances and limits is outlined in the [Sewer Use By-law](#). The City is updating the by-law in order to meet the needs of residents and ensure the protection of public health, the environment and infrastructure. The updated Sewer Use By-law will come into effect on June 28, 2016.

Why does Vaughan need a Sewer Use By-law?

Vaughan's Sewer Use By-law protects sewer systems, creeks, rivers, streams and lakes. The by-law also establishes discharge limits on substances that may impact the safe and efficient operation of Vaughan's sewers and negatively affect public health, property or the environment. Minimizing impacts on the City's sewer infrastructure ensures a wastewater system that is more reliable, less expensive to maintain and incurs less repair and replacement costs. Taking action also protects the City's water supply from harmful substances.

Who does the Sewer Use By-law apply to?

Vaughan's Sewer Use By-law applies to all residents, including industrial, commercial and institutional properties.

Who enforces the Sewer Use By-law and how is it enforced?

Vaughan's Environmental Services department enforces the Sewer Use By-law by monitoring and sampling substances and materials released into Vaughan's sewers. The by-law is enforced by notifying those who are in violation of the by-law, laying charges after repeat violations and recovering costs for system repairs through legal action.

Why is the by-law being updated?

In order to meet the needs of residents and ensure the protection of public health, the environment and infrastructure, an updated by-law is required. The updated Sewer Use By-law is a best-practices guide that improves the City's ability to effectively manage and operate its sewer systems. It will also allow the City to address modern development practices that affect sewer use.

What changes have been made to the Sewer Use By-law?

The Sewer Use By-law contains some of the following updates:

- stricter limits on substances that are permitted to be discharged into the sewer system
- increase in the total number of metals that have stricter discharge limits
- increase in the maximum penalty from \$1,000 to \$100,000 for a violation
- introduction of new compliance and pollution prevention tools to assist businesses

How does exceedance of discharge parameters impact the local and regional sewer infrastructure?

Exceedance of Fats, Oils, Grease, and pH impacts the operational performance of the local sewer infrastructure affecting sewer capacity, causing backups, corrosion, etc. Exceedance of bio-chemical oxygen demand (BOD_5), suspended solids, metals and other discharge parameters, as stated in the Sewer Use By-law, affect the operational performance of the regional sewer system resulting in increased cost for the treatment process. Exceedance of discharge parameters in both the local and regional sewer system reduce the life cycle of the infrastructure.

What tools are in place to help businesses comply with the Sewer Use By-law?

Compliance program: Vaughan's Sewer Use Compliance Program focuses on industrial and commercial discharges into the sewer system. The program addresses three types of pollutants:

- oil and grease (which can lead to blockages in the sewer system)
- pH (which can cause damage to sewer pipes)
- suspended solids or small solid particles (which can cause blockages in the sewer system)

Pollution prevention plan: When businesses are not in compliance with the Sewer Use By-law, they may be required to develop a pollution prevention plan. This program helps businesses take preventive action against harmful substances that end up in the sewer system. The prevention plan is a review of the business's processes, practices, materials and products

in an effort to find ways to control pollution, recycle, make changes to treatment practices or substitute unsafe materials with less harmful alternatives.

Can I wash my car in the driveway or on the street?

Protecting our ponds, rivers and water systems is very important, and many of us contribute to polluted water runoff without realizing it. Washing your car in the driveway can send dirt, motor oil, grease, metals, rust, salts, anti-freeze, detergents, soaps and other hazardous chemicals into our stormwater sewer system. Here's how you can do your part to help:

- Visit your local car wash for a cleaning. Car-washing facilities are connected to sanitary sewers that treat contaminated water.
- Instead of hosing down your car, use a pail and washcloth to clean it and then dispose of the water in a laundry sink or toilet. This method helps prevent soaps and detergents from entering our stormwater grates, and can reduce your water bill.
- Have regular checkups for fluid leaks. Motor oil, anti-freeze and gasoline residue on pavements can be collected by rainfall and travel to our stormwater systems.
- Check the forecast. A good rainfall can give your car a natural wash.
- Instead of using cleaners, soaps and detergents with harmful chemicals, look for environmentally friendly options that meet third party certification requirements such as the US EPA Safer Standard.

Can I dump pool water into the storm sewer?

No. Water that enters the storm sewer eventually makes its way to creeks, rivers and streams. Chlorinated pool water can be harmful to fish, plant life and other microorganisms that play an important role in maintaining healthy streams. Pool water must be dechlorinated before it's discharged, preferably onto the lawn where it can be properly absorbed.

What is a temporary discharge permit?

If you need to temporarily drain water into the City's sewer system — such as water from a construction site, pond or tank — you must apply for a temporary discharge permit. Contact the Environmental Services department for a Discharge Approval Application Form and other required documents. As Vaughan's sewer system is connected to York Region's sewer system, applicants are required to contact the Region of York for approval. For more information, please visit york.ca/seweruse.

How do I report a violation?

For more information about filing a complaint, please visit *insert link once available*.