

Final Thoughts

The Ottawa County Water Resources Commissioner's Office encourages residents to report anyone altering or illegally dumping waste into waterways, easements or drains so appropriate action can be taken.

Please contact the Ottawa County Water Resources Commissioner's Office at (616) 994-4530, if you require further information or would like to lodge a complaint.



Ottawa County Water Resources Commissioner's Office

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REMINDER TO RESIDENTS



*Keep Drains,
Easements, and
Waterways
Clear*

When it rains, it drains.



Illegal dumping costs millions

Ottawa County Water Resources Commissioner's Office would like to remind residents that dumping yard waste and household refuse in local waterways, easements and drains is increasing the risk of flooding to their properties and those of their neighbors.

What is a County Drain?

A county drain may be an open ditch, stream or underground pipe, retention pond or swale that conveys stormwater. These drains become designated as county drains through a legal process where property owners, a local city, village or township petitions the County Water Resources Commissioner to establish a county drain. Not all drains are County Drains. Natural watercourses are under the jurisdiction of the State Inland Lakes and Streams. Most roadside ditches are under the jurisdiction of the Road Commission, but some are County Drains along a road.

Landowner Responsibilities

Drains not properly cared for by property owners increases the cost of maintenance to the County Water Resources Commissioner's Office which is assessed back to the property owners. In an effort to reduce risks of flooding and costs to individual homeowners we ask for your help in keeping Ottawa County

flowing.

What You Can Do to Help

- ◆ Routine grounds maintenance such as mowing, brushing and trash/debris removal. Owners should ensure that systems and structures are kept free of yard waste (grass clippings, tree trimmings, leaves) or other obstructions that may block the flow of water.
 - ◆ Reducing tree, shrub and other growth within an easement.
 - ◆ Driveway crossings and bridges shall be kept free of debris and maintained to prevent banks from sloughing into the watercourse.
 - ◆ Keep yard drains/catchbasins free of debris before and after storm events.
 - ◆ Keep drains and drainage easements easily accessible for maintenance and inspections.
 - ◆ DO NOT place sheds, pools, landscaping features or other permanent structures in the easement or on top of drainage structures.
 - ◆ DO NOT apply pesticides and fertilizers several days before rain is forecast; if applied right before a rain, most of it will just wash off and end up in storm drain.
 - ◆ NEVER dump pet waste, used motor oil, paint chemicals or other substances into a storm drain. Information about proper disposal of household hazardous waste is available at *Ottawa County Environmental Health (616) 393-5645*.
- ### Easement Policy
- ◆ Drainage easements are obtained for specific uses such as storm water conveyance, storm water detention, ponding, floodplain or as access routes for operating, maintaining or repairing County Drains.
 - ◆ Drainage Easements are not to be considered public areas and are not open to the public.
 - ◆ Property owners retain ownership, but are restricted from building permanent structures that may interfere with or reduce drainage and/or temporary storage capacity or may impede drain maintenance of surface or subsurface systems within the easement area. This includes but is not limited to; swimming pools, sheds, garages, patios, decks, fences or other permanent structures or landscaping features.
 - ◆ Easement widths vary from drain to drain depending on the drain's size and type. Some easements are of an unspecified width.
 - ◆ Easements obtained prior to 1956 were not required by law to be recorded with the County Register of Deed's Office and are considered properly recorded if they are on file in the County Water Resources Commissioner's Office. Easements obtained after 1956 are required to be recorded at the County Register of Deed's Office and are also on file at the Water Resources Commissioner's Office. It is important to check with both offices to determine if a drainage easement exists on your property.
 - ◆ No changes to the grade within a drainage easement will be allowed. Easements are for the passage of surface drainage and it is a property owner's responsibility to maintain the surface drainage system across their property. Altering the grade may not only affect their property, but also their neighbors.