


# Protect Your Yard Drainage

Lot grading helps ensure that rain and snow melt flow away your home, and other buildings on your lot, to a better location such as a catch basin. Proper lot grading can prevent ponding of rain and snow melt, settlement, damp basements, damp yards and disputes between you and your neighbours.

As a homeowner, it is your responsibility to make sure that water continues to flow away from your foundation and does not impact neighbouring properties. Regular lot maintenance will ensure lot drainage always works as designed.

Should you alter your property in a manner that changes the way surface water flows, it is your responsibility to take appropriate steps to correct the issue. There are various regulations that place limits on alteration of property and construction. Some of these are controlled through the building permit process (e.g., pool and accessory structure permits), while others are regulated through Township bylaws (e.g., Property Standards and Site Alteration).



A backyard catch basin collects runoff and directs it into the storm sewer system, constructed within a drainage easement. Located at low points with a metal grate, it must be kept clear of debris and obstructions by the property owner.

An infiltration gallery is an underground gravel-filled feature, typically at the rear of lots, designed to help water soak into the ground more quickly.

Here are things you can do to ensure your lot continues to have good drainage.

You should:

- Maintain swales and catch basins as originally designed and keep them free of obstructions.
- Contact us if you notice stormwater features in your yard that you don't understand.
- Discuss any drainage-related work with neighbours before starting.
- Consult a qualified professional before starting projects that may affect drainage.
- Review your site plan to understand grading and layout.
- Keep raised patios, walkways, or hardscaping at least 3 ft (1 m) from property lines or swales.

Avoid:

- Directing water from roofs, foundations, or yards onto walkways, stairs, or neighbouring properties.
- Filling or altering swales with materials such as concrete, asphalt, rocks, soil, or large vegetation.
- Raising or lowering yard grades that may affect drainage patterns.
- Using fences as retaining walls; retaining walls should be at least 1m from lot lines, and those over 1m high and adjacent dwelling access or public access require a building permit.
- Installing raised gardens or patios that obstruct water flow.
- Using impermeable materials that prevent water from soaking into the ground.

A drainage swale is a shallow ditch designed to collect and carry water to a designated spot (e.g., drain to the street or a catch basin). As swales may collect water from multiple properties before discharging it further away, it is important to not fill or obstruct the swale, including when constructing your fence. Swales are commonly found between houses and in backyards.

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