

# Preventative Plumbing Program Guide

## Overview:

On January 10, 2012, Council for the City of Kingston approved the establishment of a financial assistance program to be administered by Utilities Kingston.

The primary intent of this program is to provide financial assistance to homeowners who are considering undertaking work on their own home to reduce future risk of sewage backup. Sewage backups can occur for a number of reasons, yet the most common reason is overloading of the sanitary sewer system during periods of rapid snow melt or heavy rainfall.

The secondary intent of this program is to reduce the amount of extraneous flow originating from private homes. Extraneous flow is otherwise clean groundwater or stormwater that enters the sanitary sewer systems and results in the system being overwhelmed during periods of rapid snow melt or heavy rainfall.

**The program will be officially launched on April 24, 2012.** In the interim, the information contained below describes how the program works, what sort of rebates it offers and the eligibility criteria. For more information, contact the City of Kingston Customer Service Representatives at **613-546-0000**.

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## 1. Program Details:

### What does the program cover?

The program covers a handful of very specific works that you may wish to undertake on your home to reduce the likelihood of a sewage backup. In general, it covers a fixed percentage of the costs to a fixed maximum, for eligible works. The following lists the Eligible Work and financial assistance levels.

#### Eligible Works and Costs

1. The installation of backwater sewer valve on the sanitary sewer lateral including eligible inspections, materials, labour, permit (required), and taxes.
2. The installation of a new sump pit and single sump pump with battery-power backup including eligible inspections, materials, labour, permit (if required), and taxes.
3. The severance or capping of the weeping tile (foundation drain) connection to the sanitary sewer, including eligible materials, labour, permit (if required), and taxes.
4. Rerouting of an existing sump pump discharge (disconnection from the sanitary sewer), including eligible materials, labour, permit (if required), and taxes.

#### Financial Assistance Levels

Item	% of Eligible Costs <sup>(1)</sup>	Maximum Assistance <sup>(2)</sup>
1. Backwater Sewer Valve	75%	\$1,200
2. New Sump Pit and Pump	75%	\$1,400
3. Capping of Foundation Drain Connection	50%	\$1000
4. Disconnection of Existing Sump Pump	50%	\$300
<b>Maximum Financial Assistance available per home</b>		<b>\$3,000</b>
Notes:		
(1) Each element of the program has prescribed items that are considered eligible, i.e. ALL costs associated with the work may not be covered. In very general terms, costs that are ineligible are those generally associated with internal or external restoration (i.e. restoration of landscaping or floor and wall finishing). The % of eligible costs refers to the percentage of cost of the work that will be eligible for financial assistance.		
(2) The maximum assistance is the maximum dollar value that will be eligible for financial assistance for the specific item and for the home in total.		

### What does the program not cover?

The program does not cover the following:

- Protection against basement flooding from surface water, storm water or groundwater, including things like seepage through foundations or the floor, or excessive water coming up through the sump hole (existing sump pump not able to keep up). These are private groundwater drainage issues not stemming from the sanitary sewer system.
- Upgrade or replacement of an existing sump pump, addition of a new pump to an existing sump.

- Installation of a sump & sump pump system if the foundation drain is already disconnected from the sanitary sewer.
- Damage compensation, or assistance with any rehabilitation, restoration or repair costs due to flooding.
- Restoration of disturbed landscaping, driveways, flower beds, trees, gardens, etc... on the exterior of the house
- Restoration of disturbed carpet, flooring, drywall, furnishings, framing, etc... on the interior of the house.
- Downspout disconnection (this is a mandatory program prerequisite)

## 2. Eligibility

Eligibility is based on the following Eligibility Criteria:

- The home must be located in the City of Kingston, within the area serviced by Utilities Kingston and the home must have an active Sewer account in good standing with Utilities Kingston.
- The home is a single family detached, semi-detached, row-house, duplex or triplex.
- The applicant is the owner of the home.
- Work must be completed by qualified contractors licensed by the City of Kingston.
- A licensed plumber in the City of Kingston must be hired to install a backwater valve.
- A licensed contractor in the City of Kingston must be hired to install a sump pump system and for capping the foundation drain.
- Contractor(s) must use materials or fittings that are approved by the Ontario Building Code.
- Each owner shall acquire necessary Permit(s) for the completion of eligible works.
- At the completion of the program, to be eligible for any rebates, the home's downspouts and foundation drainage must be fully compliant with City Bylaw 2008-192, Clauses 3.8-3.11, and not be capable of discharging to the sanitary sewer.
- Invoice(s) must be originals and show clear and detailed breakdown of all charges to indicate those items that qualify for rebate and those that do not, total amount paid and clearly marked PAID IN FULL by the Contractor(s).
- Work must be completed within the calendar year for which the application was made.
- Funding for eligible work is subject to available budget, first-come, first-served.
- Any single owner may only apply for two homes maximum per calendar year.
- Any single home is eligible for program enrollment once.

For more details, review the Preventative Plumbing Program's Terms & Conditions below.

### 3. Program Process

The process is as follows:

1. **Before applying**, carefully review this Guide and make sure you understand your responsibilities. Keep in mind that not all costs will be covered, and there may be significant investment still on the homeowner's part to see the work completed.

This Program is a financial assistance program, and Utilities Kingston takes no responsibility for the quality or appropriateness of the work, or any future flooding that may occur. Discuss the Program with a reputable licensed plumber or foundation contractor and see if the elements of this program suit your home.

2. **Submit the Application Form.** Do your best to review your home's eligibility, and then complete the Preventative Plumbing Program Application Form <INSERT LINK TO FORM> and send it in by mail or email. At this stage, you don't need to know exactly what elements of the program you should apply for, just that one or more of them sound good.
3. **First Appointment.** The Program Manager will contact you to make an appointment and meet with you at your home. The Program Manager will do a simple visual inspection with you, inside and outside your home, to get a sense for what might work and what might not work. Some photos will be taken of your property and basement. This is the point where you can formally start the program and your eligibility will likely be confirmed shortly thereafter. The Program Manager will let you know what items you may be eligible for, and what you are likely not eligible for and the next steps. The Program Manager will give you the Preventative Plumbing Program Assessment Form and any instructions on how to use it.

Keep in mind that the Utilities Kingston Project Manager is not a plumbing or foundation expert. The final recommendations on what works are suitable for your home will need to come from any contractors you end up working with. That decision is between you and the contractor(s).

4. **Notification.** Based on the Program Managers visual assessment, you will be sent a notification letter or email shortly thereafter. The notification will be either one of the following:
  - a **'Recommendation to Proceed'** notice, which means from what the Program Manager saw, there is a good chance that your home will be eligible to get financial assistance for one or more items covered by this Program. It is not a guarantee.
  - an **'Application Deferral'** notice, which means that the Program is full for the calendar year in which you applied, but you're shortlisted for consideration for future years.
  - a **'Program Application Denied'** notice, which means that from what the Program Manager saw, there is a good chance your home will not be eligible for financial assistance under this program.

It is possible that a contractor visits your home, does some inspections and finds that no works are suitable, in which case you may incur some costs that are not refundable.

If you receive a Recommendation to Proceed notice, this is the time when you start working on getting that Assessment Form filled in.

5. **Get Cost Estimates and Consensus.** It is recommended that, prior to proceeding with any work, you contact 2 or 3 reputable contractors who are qualified, insured and licensed in the City of Kingston. The contractors should review your options with you, and give you quotes for the work. Ideally, the contractors are all suggesting the same things. Specifically, if there is any discrepancy between what the Program Manager suggested and what your preferred contractor has suggested, it is best to review with the Program Manager prior to commencing just to avoid the risk of not receiving a rebate on a disputed item.

Please note that the contractors may not know all the answers simply by visiting your home – they may very well need to do some investigative work to figure out your plumbing. Their prices and the level of comfort you have will help you pick who you want to get to do the work.

6. **Initiate the work.** The contractor to whom you award the work will need to assist you in completing the Assessment Form, so be sure they know that in advance and give them the chance to look over the forms and be sure they are willing to help you in that regard, and help you ensure that you can collect and supply all the necessary documentation required by Utilities Kingston to qualify for the Financial Assistance.

Utilities Kingston can offer no guarantees at this stage that you will qualify for any amount of rebates, so, the responsibility is yours to ensure you meet the Terms & Conditions and supply the required deliverables as per your Assessment Form. The checklist of deliverables is as follows:

- a. Fully completed **Assessment Form**, as provided by Utilities Kingston
  - b. Copy of Utilities Kingston **Recommendation to Proceed**
  - c. CD/DVD containing a **copy of Closed Circuit Television Inspection** of the home plumbing and/or lateral clearly indicating any foundation drain connections (if completed)
  - d. Copy of all **Permits** acquired for Eligible Works, as required by local Building Code
  - e. **Original clearly-itemized invoices/receipts** detailing the work completed
  - f. **All required signatures** on the Assessment and Application Forms
7. **During the work:** Some things to consider during the work:
    - Ensure that the required Building permits are acquired. The Contractor should be able to do this for you, or you can do it yourself. The permit(s) are considered eligible costs so long as they are required specifically for the Eligible Works. Note that a permit is required for a backflow prevention device and possibly as well as for the electrical work

for new sump pumps. These permits will require a separate visit from a City of Kingston Building Official. Copies of the permits are required by Utilities Kingston.

- Verify that the Contractor undertakes a video inspection of the sewer lateral and gives you a functioning DVD (2 copies preferably), as one is a required submittal to Utilities Kingston. The video must clearly identify the foundation drain connection to the sewer lateral, or confirm that no connection exists. An inspection like this may or may not be suggested by your contractor.
  - Double check to see that the sump pump is discharging to the lawn, and has no ability to be readily reconnected or redirected to the sanitary sewer.
  - Take lots of photos and document the work being done.
  - Ensure in advance, prior to receiving any invoices, that the contractor adequately breaks out the invoice to eligible and non-eligible costs.
  - Have the contractor prove to you that they are installing everything properly and legally.
  - Ensure that the contractor provides you with any manufacturers manuals that discuss maintenance for your new backflow valve and/or your new sump pump. If not, be sure the contractor is advising you on what are adequate maintenance activities to perform, and shows you how to do it, and how often. Your new backflow or sump pump system will soon be ineffective if they are not maintained!
  - If you have any downspouts that go into the sanitary sewer, be sure they are disconnected and redirected elsewhere prior to completion of the work.
  - Make sure that the discharge locations of your sump pump and downspouts does not impact your neighbours, or put their basements at increased risk of flooding. Your stormwater should stay on your property.
8. **After the work is complete.** Once the work is complete, review the deliverables listed in the Application Checklist to make sure you have all the required items. Contact the Program Manager and a second follow-up visit will be scheduled with you.

During the follow-up visit, the Program Manager will take some more photos, verify that the works were completed, and review your paperwork and deliverables. If all looks in order, the Program Manager will expect to receive your deliverables and paperwork within 10 business days. Be sure to photocopy all documents and send the original documents to the Program Manager. If something looks amiss, the Program Manager will explain the deficiencies and direct you to rectify the situation. For example, if the contractor has hooked up your sump pump improperly, or if you have not acquired the necessary permit(s), you will be notified as soon as possible. You will need be required to remedy the situation before you proceed further with the Program. Work done improperly and work done without permits will not be eligible for financial assistance. It is your responsibility to ensure that your contractor is doing things properly and in accordance with this Program.

Please note: In no way is the Program Manager or Utilities Kingston verifying the quality of the work. Within your abilities, you, as the home owner, need to ensure your contractor is doing the job right and to your satisfaction.

9. **Submit your deliverables.** Once you have everything ready, mail your final package to the Program Manager. The final package should include:
  - a. Fully completed **Assessment Form**, as provided by Utilities Kingston
  - b. Copy of Utilities Kingston **Recommendation to Proceed**
  - c. CD/DVD containing a **copy of Closed Circuit Television Inspection** of the home plumbing and/or lateral clearly indicating any foundation drain connections (if completed)
  - d. Copy of all **Permits** acquired for Eligible Works, as required by local Building Code
  - e. **Original clearly-itemized invoices/receipts** detailing the work completed
  - f. **All required signatures** on the Assessment and Application Forms

Once all deliverables are received, all eligibility criteria have been met, and all works have been completed in accordance with the Program and the Program's Terms and Conditions, Utilities Kingston will issue a cheque, originating from the City of Kingston. Homeowners can expect to receive the cheque within about 90 days of receipt of the final package.

#### **Where can I get more information?**

For more information, contact the City of Kingston Customer Service Representatives at **(613) 546-0000**.

## 4. Terms & Conditions

1. The **Preventative Plumbing Rebate Program (“the Program”)** will be administered by Utilities Kingston.

### 2. Eligible Buildings

To be eligible for consideration for participation in the Program, the proponent must:

- (a) be located in the Utilities Kingston sewer service area;
- (b) have a residential water and sewer account with Utilities Kingston;
- (c) be classified as a single-family detached, semi-detached, row-house, duplex or triplex residential building; and,
- (d) not have applied more than twice to the Preventative Plumbing Program in the past calendar year; limit two per owner per year

### 3. Conditions for Payment

Payment of an incentive under the Program will be conditional on:

- (a) Pre-approval by Utilities Kingston of all proposed projects;
- (b) complete eligible work(s) as pre-approved;
- (c) the Applicant providing access to the building after the eligible work for inspection to permit an inspector authorized by Utilities Kingston to verify that the work(s) completed is eligible for an incentive under the Program, and is as described in pre-approval or financial assistance application documentation. Utilities Kingston may require the proponent to provide photographic evidence showing the pre and post project condition with respect to the eligible work(s).
- (d) exclusion of the incentive amount paid by Utilities Kingston to the Applicant for the eligible work(s) under the Program from the costs listed in any application for a rent increase over and above the maximum increase normally permitted under Ontario law or otherwise;

### 4. Selection of Participants

Utilities Kingston wishes to pay the incentives available under the Program on a fair basis to a broad range of eligible applicants, and therefore will take such steps as it deems appropriate to ensure that no single applicant receives a disproportionate share, regardless of whether or not the Program monies are exhausted.

Utilities Kingston reserves the right to limit the number or amount of incentives offered to any single customer or facility.

### 5. Application Deadline and Potential Extensions

Following the commencement of the Program, if Utilities Kingston determines that the number of acceptable applications is sufficient for the purposes of the Program, it will refuse all future applications.

### 6. Proof of Compliance

In order for the Applicant to become entitled to the financial incentive for participating in the program, Application documentation must be properly completed so as to identify the building, proposed measures, and acceptance of these terms and conditions by the Applicant, Utilities Kingston must pre-approve the application, and the applicant must submit the following documentation upon project completion:

- (a) Fully completed **Assessment Form**, as provided by Utilities Kingston.
- (b) Copy of Utilities Kingston **Recommendation to Proceed**.
- (c) CD/DVD containing a **copy of Closed Circuit Television Inspection** of the home plumbing and/or lateral clearly indicating any foundation drain connections (if completed).
- (d) Copy of all **Permits** acquired for Eligible Works, as required by Local Building Code.
- (e) **Original clearly-itemized invoices/receipts** detailing the work completed.
- (f) **All required signatures** on the Assessment and Application Forms.

Utilities Kingston shall make payment of any financial incentives due under the program within approximately 90 days of submission of the material described in subparagraph 6, subject to the Applicant's compliance with the Program's Terms and Conditions.

### 7. Applicant's Responsibility

Each selected Applicant must assume all financial and other responsibility for:

- (a) identifying the potential eligible work(s) for pre-approval;
- (b) choosing the installers of any eligible work(s)
- (c) the completion of any pre-approved eligible work(s);
- (d) any preparatory plumbing work or any plumbing repair work that is required to complete the eligible work(s);
- (e) ensuring that all plumbing work required is done in accordance with Ontario plumbing regulations by appropriately licensed persons.
- (f) any work considered non-eligible required to achieve full compliance with City Bylaw 2008-192 Clauses 3.8-3.11.
- (g) any and all liability related to the eligible work(s) for which incentive payments are applied for and/or issued.
- (h) all restoration expenses.

### 8. Provision to Utilities Kingston of Information and Access

Each selected Applicant must provide Utilities Kingston with access during the installation period and/or after the installation for a period up to six (6) months from the “Final Submission” to verify the installation and/or to verify that the eligibility of each piece of equipment installed, if Utilities Kingston so requests.

Utilities Kingston shall be entitled to use aggregated information and other data concerning Program participants in reports and/or promotional materials produced by and/or for Utilities Kingston.

Utilities Kingston will only approve Program applications if the Applicant submits all required forms, calculations, or other materials, and the information contained therein, directly to Utilities Kingston

**9. Disclaimer and Release**

Utilities Kingston makes no representation or warranty regarding the performance of any of the eligible work(s). Utilities Kingston makes no representation or warranty, express or implied, relating to the competence, workmanship, or suitability of any party. By submitting an Application each Applicant will be taken to have fully and unreservedly released Utilities Kingston with respect to any and all actions, causes and actions, claims and demands for damages, loss or injury arising out of or in any way related or connected to the handling of the form or information contained therein.

**10. “The Program” is subject to change and or cancellation without notice.**

## 5. Frequently Asked Questions

### **Q: Will the work associated with this Program protect my home if my sewer lateral fails?**

A: No, it will not. These efforts associated with the Program protect against surcharge of the municipal sewer system and ensure an overland flow path for foundation drainage. If your sewer lateral fails, your plumbing will back up until you notice there is a problem. Unfortunately, most homeowners only become aware of a sewer lateral failure when sewage begins spilling out of your lowest fixture, often a floor drain or basement level shower, toilet or sink. Maintaining your sewer lateral is important and you should consider having it inspected from time to time and completing any necessary repairs in a diligent and timely manner.

The bonus of this program is that a video inspection of the sewer lateral is an eligible cost, and the video inspection may reveal problems with the sewer lateral that can be remedied before a backup occurs.

### **Q: Why do the eligible works not guarantee that I won't have a sewage backup?**

A: There are a number of reasons why you may still experience a sewage backup. These include things like improper installation of the backflow prevention device or sump pit and pump, improper maintenance of the backflow device or sump pump, insufficient education on use of these items, as well as potential for problems on the sewer lateral. To best reduce the risk of flooding, here are some tips:

- The backflow prevention device must be installed according to manufacturer's recommendations. Take the time to review them, your plumber should provide them to you, and have your plumber take the time to show you that they did the job right.
- The position of the backflow device relative to any foundation drain connection to the sanitary sewer is important. Through this program, there should no longer be this connection, but have your plumber show you what they did to make sure the weeping tile is not draining in upstream of the backflow device.
- You are responsible for maintaining and servicing the backflow device. Review the manufacturer's recommendations with your plumber and perhaps keep some spare parts on hand (if available). Lack of maintenance will cause the device to malfunction and not work when you need it to.
- Make sure to acquire a plumbing permit for installation of your backflow prevention device (program prerequisite)
- Become educated on how the backflow prevention device works, and the basic do's and don'ts when you have one. For example, if the valve is closed (due to surcharge of the municipal sewer system), excessive use of water in the home will mean it has nowhere else to go, but your basement. Your contractor should provide this information to you.
- Sump pumps are another mechanical device that needs maintenance. Review the manufacturer's recommendations for maintenance and servicing with the installer.

- Consider providing a second sump pump for redundancy with one of the two on a backup form of power. Most sump pumps run off your home's electricity and therefore power failures will render the sump pumps useless. Backup power may ensure that at least one of your sump pumps will work when needed.
- Take care of your sewer lateral. Have it inspected from time to time and undertake repairs when needed, before it fails.

Many of these things require knowledge about the right things to do, or the right things to ask. For starters, a list of questions to ask your Contractor will be provided to you by the Program Manager at their first visit to your home. This will give the Program applicant the knowledge to help ensure that the work gets done right and also that the work and documentation meet the eligibility criteria.

**Q: Why doesn't the program cover other types of flooding?**

A: Utilities Kingston manages and operates the sanitary sewer system for the City of Kingston. Because of this, Utilities Kingston is able to offer assistance to homeowners to help prevent sewage backups that originate from the sanitary sewer system. On the other hand, the ground and surface water around the home is the homeowner's responsibility. It is also the homeowner's responsibility to maintain their home, and adequately manage their drainage. The Program therefore does not assist with excessive runoff or groundwater as this is solely the responsibility of the homeowner. A homeowner ultimately must ensure that their foundation is maintained and that their sump pumps are adequately sized for the groundwater conditions on their property.

If your property is subject to surface drainage from neighbouring properties or perpetually wet conditions, and you have constantly active sump pumps, you may wish to investigate this further with the City of Kingston Engineering Department who may or may not have some ideas for you, or solutions to assist you.

**Q: Can I qualify for financial assistance if I only install a backwater valve, but my foundation drain is still connected to my sewer lateral?**

A: The answer is no. The requirements of the Program must be met before you qualify for any financial assistance. The Preventative Plumbing Program is firstly a program to assist homeowners in protecting their property against sewage backups. Secondly, it helps the neighbourhood reduce sewage backups by eliminating storm-water and groundwater flows going into the sanitary sewer. Utilities Kingston is offering this program for both benefits, and only installing a backwater valve would not help reduce your neighbours' risk of basement flooding. For this reason, to be eligible, you would need to have both the backwater valve installed, and the sump pump system installed to qualify for rebates. This would put your home in compliance with City of Kingston ByLaw 2008-192 Clauses 3.8-3.11.

**Q: Why does the Program only cover a percentage of the costs?**

A: The Program has a limited amount of funding and by making a percentage contribution, Utilities Kingston will be able to assist more homeowners. This will also ensure that homeowners interested in accessing the Program have a financial commitment to the process.

**Q: Is the Program retroactive to the flood events of 2011 or earlier?**

A: No. On January 10, 2012, City Council determined that the Program should be retroactive to the approval date, which is January 10, 2012. However, homeowners who undertook or are undertaking works on their home after January 10, 2012, but prior to formal enrollment in the Program, do so at their own risk. They may not be eligible for financial assistance unless all requirements of the Program are met.