

# RESIDENTIAL LOT GRADING MAINTENANCE

## WHAT IS LOT GRADING AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Lot grading refers to sloping the ground surface on a property to direct the flow of surface water.

Whenever it rains, a properly graded property will direct the water flow away from your home and off your lot without causing any damage to your property or your neighbour's. When water does not flow away from your home, it can seriously damage your home's foundation and lead to basement flooding.

On private property, maintaining proper grading and surface drainage is the responsibility of the property owner. Here are some tips that may help.

## FOUNDATION GRADING

- When a home is being built, soil is excavated to construct the basement. The soil is then replaced but not compacted, as unsupported foundation walls can't handle the pressure generated by standard compacting techniques. As the soil settles, it can result in the ground sloping toward the home instead of away from it. Additional soil will need to be added to fill the settlement. Use clay - not topsoil - for this purpose.

## EAVESTROUGHS AND DOWNSPOUTS

- Stormwater collected by the eavestroughs flows to the ground through the downspouts. Clean and inspect eavestroughs regularly to ensure water can move freely without overflows.
- Add extensions to your downspouts. Downspout extensions move the roof water further away from your home's foundation and decrease the risk of water entering the basement. Extensions should discharge away from your foundation but not at a point where they empty onto your neighbour's property.

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## WINDOW WELLS

- Window wells are installed to ensure positive grading. Ideally, water doesn't enter window well openings. However, water that does enter should flow through the drain rock, installed at the time of construction, to the weeping tile system. Keep window wells free of debris to ensure the system works efficiently.

## CATCH BASINS

- Catch basins collect stormwater and direct it into our storm system and rivers. Keep them clear of debris, including leaves, sticks, snow and ice.

## SWALES

- Shallow, sloped channels that carry surface water off your property are called swales. Swales may be internal (only on your property) or shared (running between two properties and providing drainage for both). When it rains, you should be able to determine whether a swale draining your property is blocked, which restricts water flow, or settled, which causes ponding. Either one of these conditions can be relatively easy to fix by removing the blockage or adding soil to the settled area. Consult with your neighbour if the swale is shared between properties.
- Do not change the grading or slope of a swale, and do not obstruct the water flow by constructing a permanent structure within the swale (e.g. storage shed, raised flower bed, etc.).