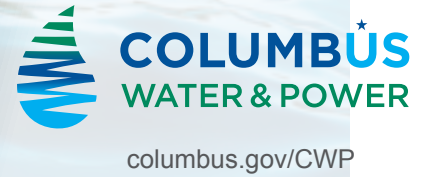


SUMMER 2025

Utility Update



It's Easy to Be a GreenSpot

GreenSpot inspires, educates and recognizes individuals, community groups and businesses that adopt sustainable practices. Are you ready to be inspired? Benefits of joining include ideas to be green, a personal spot on the website to track your green successes, a GreenSpot decal, rebates on rain barrels and native trees/plants (for eligible households), and being part of a larger movement. Are you doing any of the items below? If so, it is easy to be a GreenSpot!

GreenSpot for Individuals

With just three key commitments you can create a more environmentally friendly home. Within each commitment you decide which options fit you best, such as: changing out your light bulbs to LEDs, recycling, and installing low-flow water fixtures. There are more than 40 different pledges to choose from online. Learn more at www.ColumbusGreenSpot.org.

GreenSpot for Business

Is your business looking for ways to improve air, water and energy quality while reducing waste, pollution and expense? Becoming a GreenSpot Business can help you meet your goals.



Above - The three GreenSpotLight Award winners representing small, medium & large business categories were: Ohio Native Concepts, Kimley-Horn, and Bath & Body Works. Left to right: Councilmember Emmanuel Remy, Michael Keeler of Ohio Natives Concepts, Kevin Kershner and Andy Schneider of Kimley-Horn, and Jeff Schrenk of Bath and Body Works.

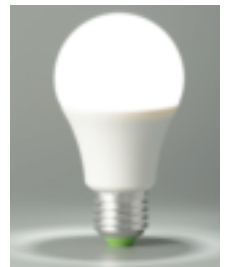
Right - Using natural loofah sponges, plastic-free reusable cleaning cloths (instead of paper towels), and LED light bulbs are just a few examples of the easy actions you can take to become a GreenSpot member.

GreenSpotLight Awards

The GreenSpotLight Awards (photo) go to businesses that demonstrate excellence in business practices that produce environmental benefits. These awards go to a small, medium, and large business. Other GreenSpot business members get recognized on social media and in the GreenSpot eNewsletters which go out to 20,000 people.

Join the more than 26,000 GreenSpot members in making our neighborhoods more sustainable!

Share what you've learned and inspire others at facebook.com/columbusgreenspot and on Instagram [@columbusGreenSpot](https://instagram.com/columbusGreenSpot).



Effective May 14, 2025, the Columbus Department of Public Utilities began doing business as Columbus Water & Power.

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Frequently Asked Questions about Sewer Overflows

What are CSOs and SSOs?

Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) are discharges of wastewater and stormwater from the combined sewer system that serves the downtown and surrounding older areas. Sanitary Sewer Overflows (SSOs) are discharges of wastewater from the sanitary sewer system. Sewer overflows can occur at various discharge points along waterways when volume temporarily exceeds capacity, typically during wet weather.

Why do sewer overflows exist?

Many years ago, prior to the existence of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) or Clean Water Act, it was common design for such relief points to exist in a sewer system to prevent backups into homes during wet weather and major rain events.

Are overflows an issue in other cities?

Yes. Solving wet-weather issues is the biggest challenge facing most sewer districts today.

What is Columbus doing about it?

Columbus Water & Power (formerly the Department of Public Utilities) developed a Wet Weather Management Plan in 2005, identifying an estimated \$2.5 billion in capital improvements over 40 years on the combined and sanitary sewer collection systems, and at the two water reclamation plants. To specifically target SSOs, Blueprint Columbus was developed to address overflows by lining home sewer laterals, preventing stormwater infiltration. That stormwater is then redirected through new downspouts and sump pumps to green infrastructure before filtering into our rivers and streams. Please see columbus.gov/utilities/clean-rivers and columbus.gov/blueprint for more information.

How will central Ohio residents benefit?

Anything that improves our environment benefits our community. Solving wet weather issues also reduces sewer backups into basements. If you live in a Blueprint neighborhood, you may be eligible for roof water redirection, lateral lining, and sump pump installation at no direct cost to you.

How are sewer improvements financed?

Sanitary sewer rate revenue and low-interest loan programs, such as the Water Pollution Control Loan Fund through the Ohio EPA, finance these infrastructure improvements. The Clean River surcharge on your Columbus sewer bill is used to repay the debt incurred on the projects. An affordability analysis was conducted to determine the community's ability to finance the plan, and revenue needs are reviewed annually.

Where are the overflow points located?

Discharge locations are along the Olentangy River from Worthington to First Avenue, on the Scioto River from around Neil Avenue to S.R. 104, and on Alum Creek from Main Street to I-70. The locations are marked with signage.

How often do they overflow?

Frequency and volume depend on the amount of rainfall and other factors. Visit columbus.gov/csosso for more information.

Should residents report overflows and backups?

Yes, please report any suspected overflows or basement backups in Columbus immediately to the 24-hour Sewer Maintenance Operations Center at 614-645-7102 or through 311. Reporting a basement sewer backup promptly is also the first step necessary to determine eligibility for the Project Dry Basement backflow prevention program for single and two-family homes in Columbus. If your home is determined to be eligible, an application will be mailed, or find it online: columbus.gov/PDB.

If I see an overflow sign, is it safe to swim near it?

No. First, be aware that swimming in local waters is prohibited by city code and is considered a drowning risk in some locations due to lowhead dams and utility crossings. To avoid possible negative health effects, always avoid water contact (including boating, wading, fishing, and swimming) near a sewer overflow location, especially following periods of heavy rain. For more information on possible health and environmental effects, please visit: epa.gov/npdes/2004-npdes-cso-report-congress.

Can residents help prevent overflows?

Yes. Please check your downspouts and foundation drains to confirm they are not connected to the sanitary sewer. Common in homes built before 1963, these outdated connections add excess water to the system during rain events and contribute to overflows/basement backups. For instructions on how to disconnect downspouts, please visit the sewer publications in our document library at columbus.gov/utilities. If your foundation drain is connected to the sanitary sewer, you may need a sump pump to direct it into the stormwater system.

Properly disposing of grease also helps prevent sewer blockages. Place grease in the trash in a sealed container such as a coffee can; do not pour down the drain. Never flush disposable wipes, even those labeled "flushable" because they do not disintegrate and can cause clogs. In addition, please make any needed repairs on your home sewer line to prevent excess water from entering the system through cracks (often caused by tree roots).