

# What's the Risk?

## Water Damage Caused by Improper Drainage



### THE ISSUE

Basement flooding is a serious issue for homeowners. The use of basements as finished living space requires them to be dry year-round. Water infiltration and the associated damages, has led to an increase in the number of water damage insurance claims and, in fact, now outpace fire as the leading cause of loss for residential single-family dwelling units.



### WHAT'S THE RISK?

Several factors can cause water to enter the basement of a house however, improper drainage is a particular problem in the spring. Melting snow and ice along with frequent rainstorms are two main causes for water infiltration, but numerous other factors can impact the situation as well.



### WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Protecting a house from basement flooding can require complex measures to be taken in advance of the winter season, but there are still options for homeowners to take to limit damage potential once snow is on the ground. The techniques below are a guide to help minimize the impact of water damage caused by improper drainage.

- Ensure all downspouts are clear of ice, snow, and leaves to enable water from eavestroughs to flow freely away from the house.
- If possible, put extensions on downspouts to increase their length to at least 2 meters (6 feet) from the foundation and raise them off the ground so they slope away from the house.
- Remove flexible plastic downspouts and replace them with solid downspout extensions.
- If rain barrels are on downspouts, ensure the overflow lines are directed away from the house. Ideally, rain barrels should be removed before the cold months set in.
- Eliminate pooling and ponding water next to your foundation as soon as possible. This may require creating flow channels in the snow or ice to prevent ponding from occurring.
- Ensure basement window wells are free of snow and ice by shoveling them out as needed.
- Watch for flooding or ponding on the street near sewer drains. Ice, snow, and leaves can all block water from entering which can cause flooding of streets and yards.

