



What is the JCMUA?

The Jersey City Municipal Utilities Authority (JCMUA) operates both the sewerage and water systems of Jersey City. They are required to ensure that all wastewater and storm water flow to the treatment plant and that fresh water reaches your home.

"The JCMUA pledges to operate and maintain its sewerage and water facilities in a fashion that will protect the public health and environment of all its constituents. It will always strive to accomplish this goal in the most competent, economical and compassionate manner possible."

Why does your basement flood?

The sewer system in the Hamilton Park area is over 100-years old. The sewers throughout downtown Jersey City have been allowed to disintegrate over many years of neglect. In the past Jersey City has only made repairs in response to regulatory directives and to promote development.

Downtown is serviced by a Combined Sewer system, which means that raw sewage and storm water are combined in the same sewer pipe. When it rains the collapsed or broken, undersized pipes backup (surcharge) and a combination of storm water and sewage floods into your basement.

It should be clear that the flooding is **NOT** due to the following:

- "Regional Groundwater Conditions;
- "Below Sea Level"
- "High Tides"
- "Underground Rivers"

Why is flooding bad for you and your home?

Water damage can cause both fungal and bacterial contamination and may damage structural components in buildings. Too much exposure may cause or worsen conditions such as asthma, hay fever or other allergens.

Common symptoms of over-exposure are cough, congestion, runny nose, eye irritation and aggravation of asthma. Depending on the amount of exposure and a persons' vulnerability, more serious health effects such as fever, breathing problems, nausea and skin rashes can occur.

Who is responsible?

It is the JCMUA's obligation to maintain the sewer system in a manner that protects human health and the environment. They are responsible for ensuring that raw sewage flows to the treatment plant and NOT back into your homes.

What are the penalties?

In response to the Clean Water Act the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) created regulations to protect human health and the environment from the discharge of sewage. In New Jersey, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is responsible for enforcing these regulations. EPA has issued stiff penalties to municipalities that fail to ensure the sewage flows to treatment plant and not into the environment:

- **City of Honolulu, HI (1994)** – The EPA fined the City \$1.2 million for failing to maintain its sewer system. EPA also required improvements to the sewer at a cost of \$30 million.
- **Metro Dade County, FL (1995)** – The EPA fined the county \$2 million for failing to maintain the sewer system, which resulted in the overflow of raw sewage into homes, streets and businesses. EPA further required improvements to the sewer at a cost of \$800 million.

Who should you contact?

- **Jersey City Municipal Utility Authority**
555 Route 440, Jersey City, NJ 07305
(201) 432-1150.
Thomas P. Kane, Executive Director
Joseph Beckmeyer, Chief Engineer
Teresa Harrington, Supervisor of Customer Service
Or email: t.harrington@jcmua.com
- **The City of Jersey City**
280 Grove Street, Jersey City, New Jersey 07302
Mayor Healy – 201-547-4900
MayorHealy@jcnj.org
Steve Fulop, Councilman Ward E
- **The New Jersey DEP**
Mr. James Hamilton, Administrator
Water Compliance and Enforcement
401 East State Street, 4th Floor, Box 422
Trenton, NJ 08625-0422
- **The New Jersey DEP**
Mr. Joe Mikulka, Manager
Northern Region – Compliance and Enforcement
7 Ridgedale Avenue, Cedar Knolls, NJ 07927
Phone: 973-656-4099

What should you ask for?

Ask for the JCMUA to fulfill their responsibility to repair and maintain the sewer system in a manner that prevents the discharge of sewage into your homes. Ask for the City to prepare a capital budget and a master plan that includes the millions of dollars it will cost to repair this 100-year old sewer system. Ask the DEP to ensure the JCMUA complies with the Clean Water Act.