Rainwater is a resource, not a waste.

By disconnecting your downspout you can:

- **improve water quality in our river and lake.** During intense rains, disconnected downspouts help prevent overflows into waterways. Only the water that is not absorbed by your yard will enter the sewers.

- **use rainwater in your yard, where it is needed.** What the plants don't use will seep into the ground and replenish the groundwater. Some homeowners may choose to store the rainwater and use it for watering plants on dry days, instead of using tap water.

Did you know?

- You can disconnect a downspout in approximately 30 minutes. The materials you need can be found at most hardware stores for about $20.

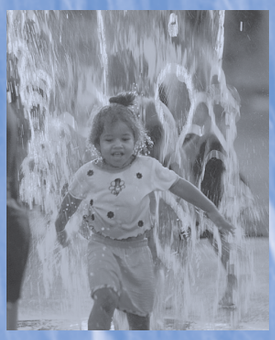
- During the course of a year, approximately 29,000 gallons of water will drain from a typical Chicago roof (1350 sq. ft.). Don't waste this resource.

- Rain barrels are a way to store rainwater for dry days when you need it. Remember to consider the need to keep overflow water away from building foundations.

City of Chicago
Richard M. Daley
Mayor

Department of Environment
N. Marcia Jimenez
Commissioner

Disconnecting Downspouts



Put Rainwater to Good Use

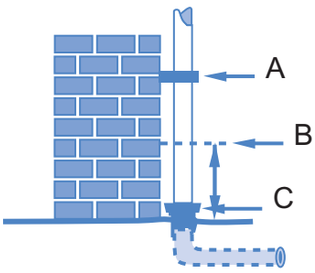
Improve Water Quality in Chicago

Neighborhoods Alive! 21

Guide to Disconnecting Downspouts

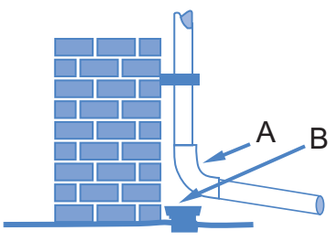
Your project should be a permanent solution which is beneficial to your grass, flowers, shrubbery and trees. Before you disconnect your downspout, consider where you are directing the water. Remember that cold weather will cause icing conditions.

STEP 1



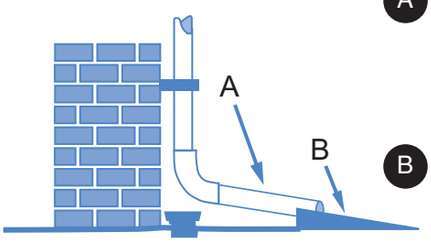
- **A** Make sure the downspout is secured to the exterior of the building. Install a bracket if needed.
- **B** Cut downspout approximately 10" above the ground using a hack or sabre saw. The height of the cut may vary from downspout to downspout.
- **C** Make a second cut several inches above the ground and remove cut-away piece, or simply loosen mortar cement with a hammer and chisel to remove.

STEP 2



- **A** Place the larger end of an elbow extension over edge of downspout, hold elbow in place and drill a hole in each side. Secure with sheet metal screws or pop rivets.
- **B** Plug top of drain tile with crumpled newspaper and fill to top with at least 1" of mortar cement.

STEP 3



Options

- **A** Position another extension over elbow (length will depend on your needs). Hold extension in place and drill a hole on each side. Secure extension with sheet metal screw or pop rivets. Alternatively, install a removable plastic extension.
- **B** Use a splashblock to protect grass and shrubbery and direct water to landscape.

Important Things to Remember

1. Make sure downspout extension (or extension plus splashblock) ends at least three feet away from the basement foundation. Direct downspout extensions toward the landscape, street or alley to prevent ponding or seepage into building foundation.
2. Firmly anchor a splashblock if water from the downspout is to travel over landscaping or dirt.
3. Do not allow water to splash or pond on adjacent private property.

Consumer Alert!

If you choose to hire someone to disconnect your downspout, make sure you hire a reputable contractor.

- Never sign a contract that contains blank spaces.
- Make sure the contract and work performed reflect the direction in this brochure.
- Make sure you have the right to cancel within three days and that the work carries a guarantee of your satisfaction.
- If you have any questions or complaints, please call the City of Chicago Department of Consumer Services at 312.744.9400.