

## Customizable CSO Fact Sheets

The Urban Water Solutions Initiative has developed a series of customizable fact sheets for use by residents, local organizations, and anyone else interested in educating the general public on combined sewer overflows (CSOs) and CSO solutions.

The factsheets were developed with input from NY/NJ Baykeeper, Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources Program and the Department of Environmental Protection.

The factsheets are available in two forms:

- generic, which can be used in any location; and
- customizable, which can be tailored with an organization's information, logo and information specific to your community.

The customizable templates have red text indicating areas where organizations can make changes and are available electronically in PowerPoint to ensure near universal usability. Each template has been translated into Spanish and Portuguese.

A list of the templates is below and copies are attached. They are available for download and use at [njfuture.org/water](http://njfuture.org/water)

Title: **Fixing Our City's Old Sewers**

Description: This fact sheet describes what combined sewers and combined sewer systems are, what sorts of problems they cause, and a general overview of solutions to the problem.

Title: **Our City's Plumbing Problem**

Description: This fact sheet introduces what communities are doing to solve the CSO problem as well as how the public is expected to be involved. Additionally, this sheet includes a list of solutions that communities may include in their long term plans, as well as general ideas of how to pay for repairs and upgrades.

Coming soon: **Navigating the CSO Permit**

On the back of this page, please see an instructions sheet on how to customize the templates.

Text in red is meant to be customized. If your organization is not customizing this text, then convert this to black text. Be sure to check the front and back of the fact sheet!

This is set to print out on a regular 8.5 x 11 paper. You may need to shift margins

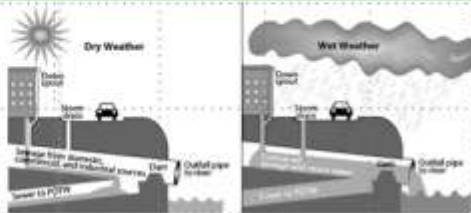
This can be changed to your city's name

# Our city's plumbing problem

Our sewers back up into streets and spill into rivers when it rains

## Our old plumbing

As long as the toilet flushes and the shower drains, we rarely think about our sewers. But in parts of our city, what we flush sometimes spills into the river and streets when it rains. That's because we have old plumbing. Parts of our sewer system were built about 100 years ago, when putting sewage in the same pipes that took stormwater off streets was the newest technology. This is called a combined sewer system.



This is how a combined sewer system works when it's dry and when it's raining or snowing. Graphics courtesy of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The text here can be customized with neighborhood or community-specific combined sewer-related flooding examples.

## What is a CSO?

During dry weather, combined sewer pipes take sewage to the treatment plant. When it rains or snow melts, the same pipes have to handle all that extra water as well. Sometimes they can't. When the pipes get too full, the sewage-contaminated water spills out through huge pipes into our waterways. These pipes, or outfalls, are called combined sewer overflows, or CSOs. In New Jersey, 23 communities have them.

## How combined sewers may cause flooding

When sewer pipes can't hold all of the stormwater rushing in, water can back up and flood streets or even basements. In some areas, floodwater may be contaminated with sewage. In other areas, street flooding can cause traffic jams or damage cars. This means people can't get to work, can't get home, and may have to live in housing that is flooded repeatedly.

You can add another line here to note how many CSOs your city has.

## Combined Sewer Problems

- **Health:** We can get sick if we are exposed to raw sewage that has spilled in waterways from CSOs, or backed up into homes or streets.
- **Recreation:** Sewage overflows can make recreation on rivers and streams unsafe for at least 24 to 48 hours.
- **Environment:** Sewage overflows can cause beach closures, harm aquatic habitats, contaminate shellfish beds, and dump lots of trash into waterways.



Left: Street flooding in Hoboken on June 1, 2015. Right: workers washing sewage residue off the same street after the flood. Photos courtesy of Emily Lobkovsky, @lobkovskymedia.

Photographs here can be used or can be replaced with local pictures. Make sure to revise the credit line if you change photos.

## How raw sewage can make you sick

People exposed to raw sewage can develop multiple health problems, including diarrhea and vomiting, and skin, eye, and ear infections. Contaminated water also may contain toxic chemicals that could cause short- and long-term health risks.

Put your organization's logo here



Local contact info here. Local contact info here. Local contact info here. Local contact info here.

## Who is most affected in your community?

- Residents of certain flood-prone neighborhoods
- Commuters who must travel through flood-prone streets
- Children and others who play in contaminated floodwaters
- Anglers and others who use waterways with CSO outfalls

You can customize this for specific neighborhoods in your community. Keep to four lines in order to maintain the design.

For more information and links to resources, check out the Urban Waters Solutions Initiative: [www.rfuture.org/water](http://www.rfuture.org/water)

Put your organization's contact information here