

Disconnecting downspouts from pipes in the street helps keep roof runoff from carrying pollutants to our local waterways and helps prevent flooding. Done correctly, disconnected downspouts direct water away from your house toward a landscaped area where rainwater can soak into the ground.



# DIY DOWNSPOUT DISCONNECTION

## READY TO DISCONNECT YOUR DOWNSPOUT?

Develop a plan to ensure that the water soaks into the ground without damaging your house or neighboring properties.

Remember these key tips:

- Figure out where your downspouts drain – do they go to a pipe in the street, to a nearby stream, or somewhere else?
  - If your downspouts already connect to an infiltration trench or drywell, you're all set! No need to disconnect.
  - Make sure the ground slopes away from your buildings and neighboring property lines (and no steeper than 15%). Don't flood sidewalks, basements, or your neighbors.
  - Provide enough space for rain to safely soak into the ground. Yard area must be at least 10% of the roof area that drains to downspout (i.e., 500 square feet of roof needs at least 50 square feet of yard).
- Downspout extensions must be directed to at least:
    - ✓ 5 feet from buildings with crawlspaces
    - ✓ 10 feet from buildings with basements
    - ✓ 5 feet from property lines
    - ✓ 10 feet from neighboring buildings
    - ✓ 50 feet from steep slopes
  - Slow and spread the flow from downspout with a splash block, rock, or perforated pipe.
  - Hire a contractor, if needed, to advise your or to do the work.
  - Contact Kirkland Public Works at 425-587-3800 with questions regarding your downspout disconnection plan.

## MATERIALS YOU'LL NEED

### TOOLS FOR PROJECT

Hacksaw



Drill



Needle-nose pliers or crimpers



Tape measure



Screwdriver



### SUPPLIES FOR PROJECT

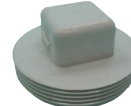
Downspout elbow  
(that fits your downspout)



Downspout extension  
(that fits downspout elbow)



Cap with hose clamp for standpipe  
(or expansion plug with wingnut, if cap doesn't fit)



Downspout hanger bracket  
or strap



Sheet metal screws

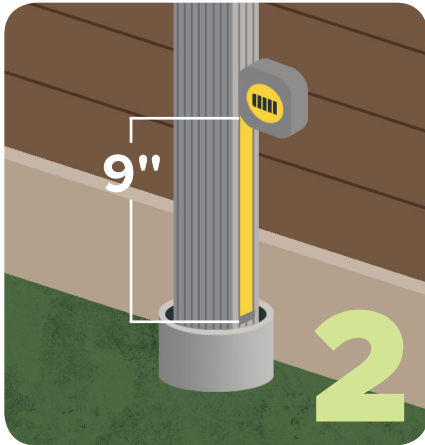


Splash block, rock,  
or perforated pipe

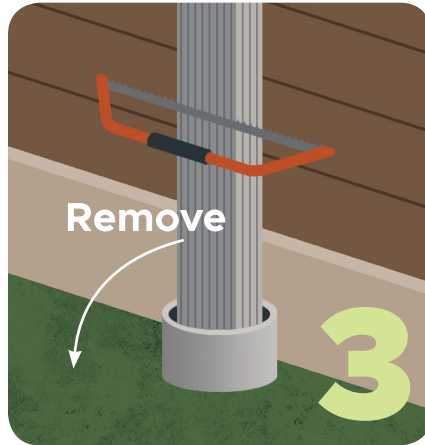


## HOW TO DISCONNECT YOUR DOWNSPOUT

1. Safety first! Put on work gloves and eye protection.



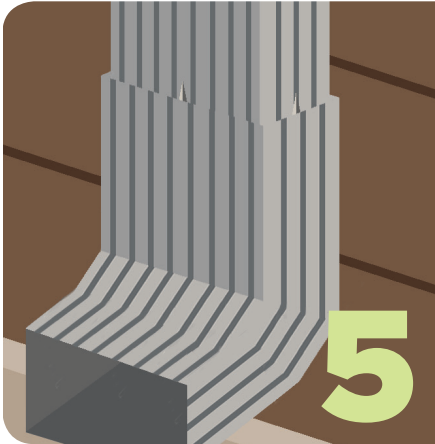
2. Measure the existing downspout from the top of the standpipe (the pipe going into the ground) and mark it at about 9 inches above the standpipe. You may need to cut the downspout higher depending on the length of your extension.



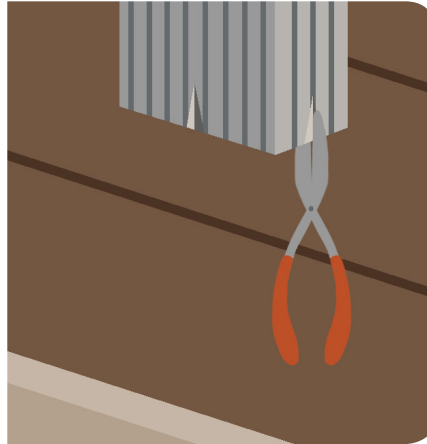
3. Cut the existing downspout with a hacksaw at the mark – hold onto the short piece so it doesn't fall into the pipe. Remove the cut piece from the end of the standpipe.



4. Plug or cap the standpipe using an expansion plug or an over-the-pipe cap secured by a hose clamp. Measure the inside diameter of the pipe and ask at the hardware store for the right size. Do NOT use concrete to seal your standpipe.



5. Attach the elbow. Be sure to attach the elbow OVER the downspout. Do NOT insert the elbow up inside the downspout or it will leak. If the elbow does not fit over the downspout, use crimpers or needle-nose pliers to crimp the end of the cut downspout so it slides INSIDE the elbow.

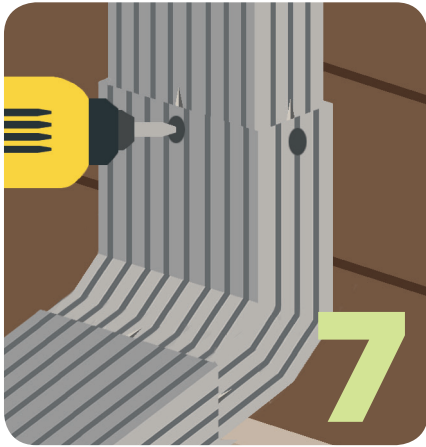


6. Measure and cut the downspout extension to the desired length. Attach the extension to the elbow by slipping the extension OVER the end of the elbow. Do NOT install the elbow over the extension or it will leak. The length of the extension will depend on site conditions and where you want the downspout to drain.

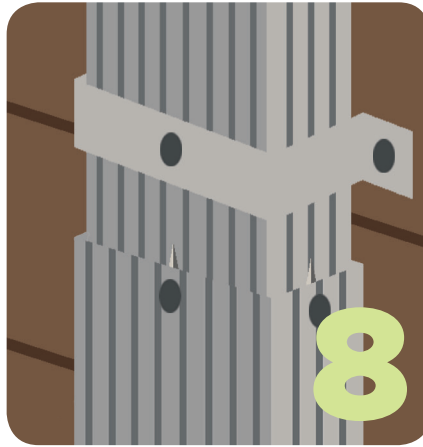
✓ Downspouts must drain at least 10 feet from basement walls and at least 5 feet from crawlspaces and concrete slabs.

✓ The end of the downspout must be at least 5 feet from your property line.

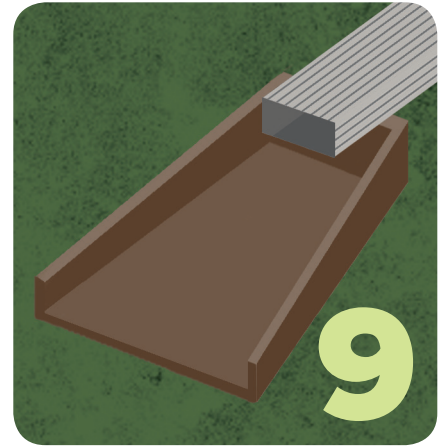




7. Secure the pieces with sheet metal screws at each joint where the downspout, elbow, and extension connect. You only need to use 2 screws per joint. Never put any screws on the bottom of the parts because it will leak. It helps to pre-drill holes for the screws.



8. Add a new hanger bracket around the downspout above the cut, if needed to support the downspout and the new elbow and pipe you are adding.



9. Add a splashblock, rock or perforated pipe at the end of the pipe extension to slow the flow and spread runoff into landscaping.

## MAINTENANCE



Proper maintenance of your gutters and downspouts can reduce problems. At least twice a year you should:

- ☐ Clean roof gutters. This is especially important if you have overhanging trees.
- ☐ Check downspouts, elbows, and extensions for blockages.
- ☐ Repair any damage or visible leaks at connection points.
- ☐ Ensure gutters drain into your downspouts.



**Kirkland Public Works -  
Surface Water Division**

[www.kirklandwa.gov/stormwater](http://www.kirklandwa.gov/stormwater)

*Disclaimer: This sheet contains general guidance only, which may not be appropriate or safe for every property. You assume the risk and are responsible for all consequences of your modifications to drainage flow on your property, for legal compliance, and for necessary permits and authorizations. The City of Kirkland is not responsible for your modifications and disclaims liability for your actions.*



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