

Spring Hill MS4/Storm Water Department

199 Town Center Parkway, P O Box 789

Spring Hill, Tennessee 37174

Storm Water Structure Safety Hazards

Storm water structures pose a significant hazard. These include catch basins, area drains, weirs, inlet and outlet headwalls, decelerators, storm drain pipes, manholes, swales, check dams, gabions, silt fence, detention basins, retention basins, and emergency spill ways. They are some items you will see in the City of Spring Hill. These structures are found in our subdivisions, construction sites, businesses, parks and rights-of-way all over the nation. Some are in residential yards or HOA common areas. They pose hazards to people and pets. They pose a specific hazard to children appearing to be a place to play. Fenced back yards for children and pets can reduce this hazard. Fences can be installed with storm water gates to allow water and debris to pass through if properly designed, installed and maintained.

Storm water structures are essential to protect our property despite the hazards. Their purpose is to remove storm water preventing flood damage. Processing storm water at a calculated pre-determined rate, the structures are designed to remove contaminants, regulate the flow and improve the quality of our storm water. Spring Hill storm water ends up in the Duck River Water Shed that provides our drinking water year round as well as other municipalities.

Some hazards of storm water structures are below:

*Drowning due to high water or high velocity water in basins, swales and flow control devices such as weirs, catch basins, area drains and headwalls

*Injuries due to falls on loose stone, mud, openings, slick and unstable surfaces in basins, swales, emergency spill ways, catch basins, area drains and headwalls.

*Bites and stings from poisonous and non-poisonous insects and animals both wild and domestic that are found inside these structures (black widow spiders, leeches, ticks; rabid or hostile animals such as dogs, cats, skunks, possums, snakes, rats, mice, etc). They may transmit disease or infection to humans and pets. This is a reason not to let your pet run at large, prohibited by Municipal Code.

* Contracting illness from contaminated storm water or the structures themselves. They contain oil, anti freeze, paint, solvents, acids, microorganisms (infectious causing bacteria, virus, and parasites), fecal coliform (from wild and domestic animal waste), mold and fungus.

*Injury from items deposited during storm events; broken glass, trash, debris, garbage, limbs, metal, construction materials, medical waste (needles from illegal drug users), knives, firearms and other discarded items.

*Becoming trapped in openings such as manholes, weirs, catch basins, area drains and under ground storm water pipes. This subjects personnel to the same hazards in order to

affect a rescue attempt. Additionally there is the matter of the rescue cost that the City will incur.

Children are prohibited from playing around all storm water structures. Only qualified storm water technicians are allowed around these structures for required inspections, maintenance and repair. Property owners, renters and contractors may access these areas to mow grass, trash and debris removal, etc. It is the parent or guardian that are responsible to ensure that children keep a away, to avoid the hazards present at all storm water structures.

Do not block storm drains for any reason. This will only be accomplished by qualified personnel. Blockages result in flooding and injuries. They can not be blocked with unapproved grates or other fixtures as it affects the calculated design flow rate required for proper drainage. Children and adults can become trapped against the grate or blockages due to the intense water pressure produced by the rapid flow of storm water pressing against them. Force created by water pressure from the restricted water flow may break bones or cause death. **This is a more serious life threatening issue when a small child is involved due to their fragile bodies.** You may be held liable for all damages, injuries, and death that result.

If you or your children are contaminated with untreated storm water wash hands prior to eating, drinking, or putting hands around eyes, mouth, or open cuts and sores.

The bottom line is this. Until there is a better engineered, more economical, approved solution, this is the storm water system that we have. There is a level of risk with storm water structures as with all public utilities. Spring Hill is no exception. The risk is the same in all municipalities throughout the country. Hazards can be significantly reduced through educating your children and installing approved fences on your property as necessary. The City of Spring Hill is dedicated to do all we reasonably can to keep our neighborhoods as safe as we possibly can. Please do you part and use good judgment where your children are concerned regarding storm water structure hazards. Safety, health and welfare depend on it.

Thank you for your attentiveness and cooperation, from the MS4/Stormwater Department.

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