

**Athens-Clarke County**  
**Department of Transportation & Public Works**  
**Standard Operating Procedure**  
**Drainage Complaint**

**Purpose:** To provide a standard procedure for staff to respond to drainage complaints.

**Updated:** December 5, 2017

**Athens-Clarke County (ACC) Responsibilities**

- Drainage systems within ACC rights-of-way, including stabilization of discharge points that may lie slightly outside the right-of-way
- Drainage systems on ACC-owned properties
- Drainage systems located on private property but lying within drainage easements that have been *legally conveyed* to ACC (former City or County governments)
- A-CC *may* perform work on drainage systems located on private property only in emergency situations when public safety is threatened

**Property Owners' Responsibilities**

Drainage systems on private property are entirely the responsibility of the property owner. These responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Natural watercourses.
- Open channel drainage-ways.
- Pipe systems, whether or not they are extensions of the A-CC system.

Additionally, the installation and maintenance of driveway pipes within the right-of-way are entirely the responsibility of the property owner they serve, as specified in the A-CC Driveway Ordinance.

**Athens-Clarke County Participation in Drainage Improvements to Private Property**

Athens-Clarke County may assist qualified property owners through a **Drainage Improvement Agreement (DIA)**. All of the following criteria must apply to be eligible for a DIA:

- Must be single-family, owner-occupied property
- A portion of the runoff involved in the problem must come from publicly-owned land, such as right-of-way.
- There must be an expected material cost equal to or greater than \$500 per property. Note material costs may include contracted costs including, but not limited to, the contracted cost of tree and stump removal.
- The problem must be more than a nuisance such as eroded landscaping or an occasionally-flooded yard, garden, or driveway. Legitimate problems include:
  - Flooded dwelling, crawl space, or HVAC unit
  - Failed pipe system
  - Major soil erosion
- All development on the property must have been completed for at least one year.
- Property owner must provide safe heavy equipment access to the worksite.

## **Procedure**

1. Property owner calls with a drainage complaint.
  - a. If the complaint is related to new development, either currently in progress, or less than a year old, forward caller to Permit Supervisor
  - b. If the complaint is related to a detention pond, active stream (not ditch) or illicit discharge, forward complaint to the Stormwater Inspector.
  - c. All other complaints are forwarded to Streets & Drainage (S&D) Inspector
2. Enter information in Drainage Complaint Database
3. S&D Inspector conducts onsite evaluation of complaint and determines one of the following:
  - a. If problem can be corrected within the right-of-way, S&D Inspector creates a Work Order for S&D to fix. S&D Superintendent contacts Engineering Administrator for technical assistance as needed.
  - b. If problem cannot be corrected within the right-of-way and does not qualify for a DIA, S&D Inspector offers solutions to be undertaken by the owner. If problem requires further attention, S&D Inspector notifies S&D Superintendent to contact Engineering Administrator or Stormwater Administrator for technical assistance as needed.
  - c. If problem is DIA-eligible, proceed with either #4 (engineering assistance required) or #5 (engineering assistance not required).
4. DIA-eligible, engineering assistance required:
  - a. S&D Inspector contacts Design Coordinator via email to request technical assistance with DIA, copying S&D Superintendent and Engineering Administrator.
  - b. Design Coordinator completes design and final cost estimate.
  - c. Design Coordinator makes contact with affected property owner(s).
5. DIA-eligible, engineering assistance not required:
  - a. S&D Inspector contacts Operations Coordinator
  - b. Operations Coordinator completes design sketch and final cost estimate.
  - c. Operations Coordinator makes contact with affected property owner(s).
6. Design Coordinator or Operations Coordinator communicates cost estimate(s) to homeowner. If homeowner wishes to proceed, Design Coordinator or Operations Coordinator assembles and mails DIA offer to homeowner which consists of:
  - a. Cover letter
  - b. Drainage Improvement Agreement
  - c. Exhibit "A" Materials' Cost Estimate
  - d. Right-of-Entry Agreement, if applicable
7. Homeowner executes DIA and returns documents, along with full payment of material cost. See Engineering internal administrative procedure for processing DIA. Engineering forwards plans and copy of final cost estimate to S&D. Construction schedule is communicated to homeowner.
8. Project is staked out and reviewed "on the ground" with homeowner and S&D to ensure mutual understanding of the proposal.