**August 19, 2009**

## Toronto home retrofitted against basement flooding

The Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction (ICLR), with support from the City of Toronto, has retrofitted a Toronto home to reduce the risk of basement flooding. On August 19, 2005, a major rainstorm in the Greater Toronto Area caused more than $500 million in insured damage - the costliest natural catastrophe in Ontario history and the second most expensive on record for the country. Since then, there have been numerous severe storms causing basement flooding. Armed with knowledge of the practical tips used in the retrofit, homeowners can protect themselves and reduce the chance of flooding.

"Basement flooding, caused by overland water flows, infiltration and sewer backup, is a major concern for many urban municipalities in Canada," said ICLR's Executive Director Paul Kovacs. "With the increase in the frequency and intensity of rainfall events, along with urbanization and aging infrastructure, more homeowners are experiencing basement flooding. Effective management of flood risks requires investment and upgrading of municipal sewer infrastructure -- along with educated homeowners who take action to prevent flooding."

"Protecting properties from flooding is a shared responsibility .This retrofit demonstrates a number of ways that property owners can help guard against it," said Toronto Water's Director of Infrastructure Management Michael D'Andrea. "The City of Toronto has resources and a subsidy program to help homeowners be proactive and protect their homes against flooding."

The City's Basement Flooding Protection Subsidy Program provides subsidies for the installation of a number of devices including a backwater valve and sump pump. For information about how to apply, and other resources, visit www.toronto.ca/water/sewers/basement_flooding.htm.

ICLR has issued its "Handbook for Reducing Basement Flooding," a new publication that addresses the concerns of homeowners, local governments and insurance companies of the increasing instances of basement flooding, by providing comprehensive information on how to mitigate flood risk for individuals and communities. The handbook contains 20 measures that homeowners can take to reduce their risks and their neighbourhoods' risk of basement flooding. Many of the measures are simple and relatively inexpensive -- for example, downspout disconnection, and sealing any cracks in foundation walls and basement floors.

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Toronto is Canada's largest city and sixth largest government, and home to a diverse population of about 2.6 million people. It is the economic engine of Canada and one of the greenest and most creative cities in North America. Toronto has won numerous awards for quality, innovation and efficiency in delivering public services. 2009 marks the 175th anniversary of Toronto's incorporation as a city. Toronto's government is dedicated to prosperity, opportunity and liveability for all its residents.

Established in 1998 by Canada's property and casualty insurers, ICLR is an independent, not-for-profit research institute based in Toronto and at the University of Western Ontario in London, Canada. ICLR is a centre of excellence for disaster loss prevention research and education. ICLR's research staff is internationally recognized for pioneering work in a number of fields including wind and seismic engineering, atmospheric sciences, water resources engineering and economics. Multi-disciplined research is a foundation for ICLR's work to build communities more resilient to disasters.

Media contacts:

Cheryl San Juan, Senior Communications Coordinator, City of Toronto, cell (event day) 416-994-3575, tel. 416-392-8259, chsanjua@toronto.ca

Glenn McGillivray, Managing Director, ICLR, ext. 3216, use cell 416-277-5827, tel. 416-364-8677,

fax 416-364-5889, gmcgillivray@iclr.org

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