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Oak Park officials declare local disaster

After more than eight inches of rain fell in Oak Park this weekend, officials have declared the Village a disaster area, a step that could offer residents access to federal funds to help pay for repair and clean-up costs.

According to the rain gauge mounted on Oak Park's Central pumping station, 8.33 inches of rain fell between 6 p.m. Friday and noon on Saturday. Rain fell at almost an inch per hour between 10 p.m. and 2 a.m., overwhelming sewers, flooding streets and yards, and quickly pushing into basements.

The northeast quadrant of the Village appears hardest hit, with many residents reporting several inches of water in their homes. The entire Village was affected, however, and the Eisenhower Expressway as well as the CTA blue line were shut down for most of Saturday as high water pooled under overpasses and covered tracks in some areas.

Village President David Pope is expected to sign a letter today declaring Oak Park a local disaster. If approved by the county and state, the declaration would allow residents to apply for federal disaster aid programs, including low-interest repair loans.

In the meantime, residents can place water-damaged debris with their regular trash for pick-up this week and next, without attaching pink refuse stickers. Debris should be placed in the regular collection area. Items should not be placed in the streets, which could clog sewer grates should more rain fall.

Information on dealing with flood-damage also is posted on the Village web site at www.oak-park.us/publichealth, just look for the links along the right margin under publications.

For more information on debris disposal, call 708.358.5700 or e-mail publicworks@oak-park.us.

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