



# Sewer Backups

## What You Should Know and How You Should Protect Yourself

Occasionally a blockage in a sewer line will result in a backup of sanitary sewage into a private home. If you experience a backup, immediately contact the City of Roseville Public Works Department. The following information will answer the basic questions about what to do if you experience a backup and how to begin cleaning.

### INSURANCE

According to the Insurance Information Institute, most sewer backups are not covered under a typical homeowner's insurance policy, nor are they covered by flood insurance. For homes that have been severely damaged by sewer backups and are uninhabitable, your basic homeowner's policy may include *Loss of Use* coverage, which provides reimbursement for lodging, food and other living expenses you may incur if you have to vacate your home. For most

consumers, coverage for sewer-related problems must be purchased either as a separate product or as a rider on the homeowner's policy. Fortunately, sewer backup coverage is available from most insurance companies for a nominal cost; a small price to pay for significant piece of mind and protection.

### CLEAN UP

For large clean ups, we suggest you call a cleaning service. Your insurance carrier might have suggestions on which service to use or you can look in the Yellow Pages. For smaller backups you can clean yourself, use a solution of two tablespoons chlorine bleach in one gallon of water. Thoroughly clean the areas affected by the backup as soon as possible. The Minnesota Department of Health suggests:

- Use outside air & an exhaust fan to remove moist air from the house.
- If your basement is flooded, pump the water in stages – about one-third per day. Make sure the level of floodwater outside is below the level of the basement floor. If not, do not pump the basement all at once because the saturated soil could cause the basement walls to collapse.
- Wear a mask & consult your physician if you have questions.
- Open, clean, decontaminate, and thoroughly dry cavities in walls, floors, and ceilings.
- Allow walls to dry from the inside out.
- Remove moisture and debris from all surfaces.
- Remove & toss all interior wall finishing materials and insulation.

- If you think you might have materials containing asbestos in your home, call the Minnesota Department of Health at 651-201-4620.
- If any materials are still wet or moist after 24-48 hours, you should assume they have mold growing on them.

**Do not mix chlorine bleach with ammonia. This combination produces poisonous gas!**

### FOOD

- Throw out any opened food or packaged foods that are not waterproof. Commercially canned foods can be salvaged if the labels are removed and the cans thoroughly washed. The cans should be disinfected by wiping the entire surface with a laundry bleach and water mixture and rinsed in clear water.

### CLOTHING & HOUSEHOLD

- Line-dry all articles before attempting to clean or treat them.
- After drying, brush off loose dirt and debris.
- Wash clothes several times in cold water. Add up to a cup of bleach per load of wash.
- Throw out mattresses and pillows.

### FLOORS & FURNITURE

- Pull up waterlogged carpet & pads immediately to prevent further floor damage. Throw away the pads.
- Clean and dry your floors thoroughly.

### WET HARDWOOD FLOORS & APPLIANCES

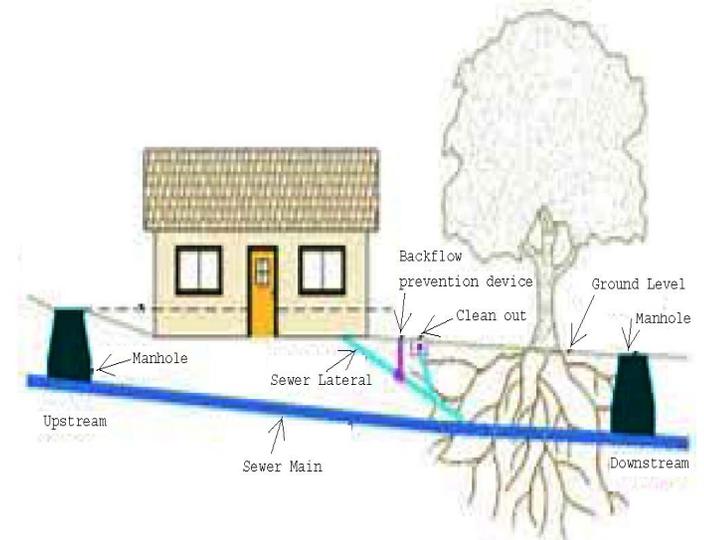
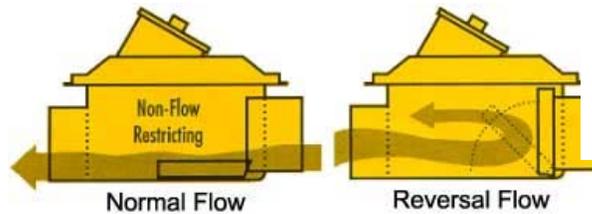
- Scrub floors and woodwork within 48 hours using a stiff brush, water, detergent, and disinfectant.

- Discard contaminated upholstered furniture.
- Clean, rinse and disinfect wood furniture.
- If the furnace was flooded, have it inspected and serviced by a professional furnace service before using.

#### RECORD KEEPING

- Take pictures of damage for your records & write description.
- Keep receipts for all work done.
- Record date and time of occurrence and note which sewer areas surcharged— floor drain, lower level toilet, laundry tub and the like.

- DISPOSABLE WIPES
- Diapers
- Paper towels
- Sanitary Napkins
- Garage waste, such as oil & grease
- Ashes, corrosives, glass, metals, paint
- Yard waste, such as sand, soil, or mud



### Inflow & Infiltration (I&I)

Inflow and infiltration of water can use up sewer capacity during significant storm events. During periods of heavy rainfalls, the sewer lines become inundated with large amounts of groundwater and storm water. The sewer lines are incapable of handling the overwhelming flow. Because of this potential for I & I (clear water getting into sanitary sewer systems), City ordinance prohibits property owners from disposing of clear water into the sanitary sewer system. This includes water from any roof, surface or ground sump pump, foundation drain, or swimming pool.

### BACKUP PREVENTION

As a resident, you can play a key role in preventing sanitary sewer backups. To help prevent backups, please dispose of the following items properly, NOT by dumping in a drain or flushing down the toilet:

### PREVENTION DEVICES

The objective of a backflow prevention device is to prevent contamination from water flowing backwards in a distribution system. There are several types of backflow prevention devices. Some can be installed in the drain, others in the pipe.

#### How does it work?

A backflow valve can be installed in the basement at the exit point from the home or building, or in the sewer lateral outside of the building.

The "lateral" is the underground pipe that carries sewage from private property to the city's sewer main. The backflow valve is installed downstream and prevents sewage from backing up into the lateral beyond ("above") this valve. Typically, sanitary sewer service is a gravity based system and any blockage can result in a backflow from upstream.

### Cost

Prices vary depending on the plumbing setup. The backflow devices themselves may cost a few hundred dollars, but we suggest you consult your local plumber for further information regarding cost, including installation cost. It is always a good idea to get 2 to 3 estimates to ensure a fair price.

For more information, contact the City of Roseville Public Works Department at 651-792-7004. For cleanup info, visit the MN Department of Health's website at [www.health.state.mn.us](http://www.health.state.mn.us).



**City of Roseville**  
**Public Works Department**  
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[www.cityofroseville.com](http://www.cityofroseville.com)