



Sewer Backups



The following information will answer the basic questions about what to do if you experience a backup and how to begin cleaning.

If You Have a Backup

Call non-emergency dispatch at 952-258-5321 to report a sewer backup. City utility staff will follow up to confirm the backup is not in the city sanitary sewer main.

If you have a question about sewer backups, contact the city at...

763-531-1000

publicworks@crystalmn.gov

Keeping Records

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

Insurance

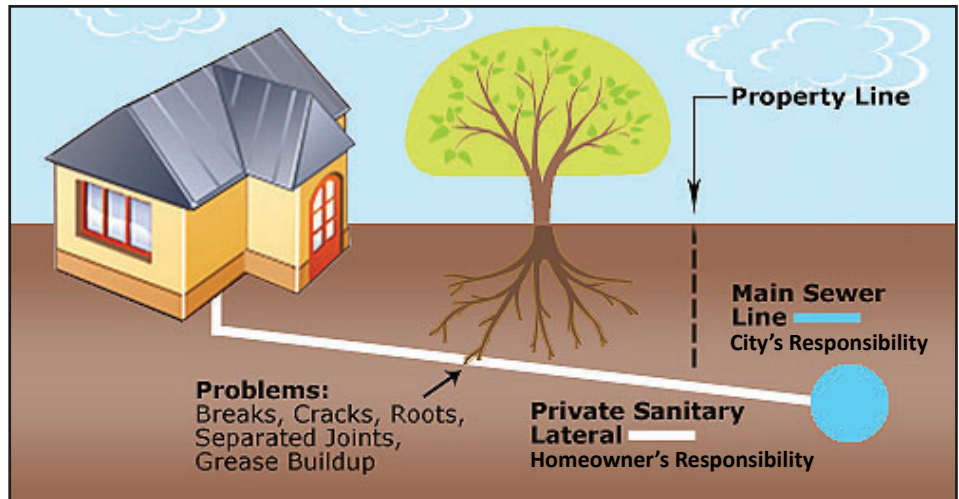
Contact your homeowners' insurance carrier as some policies cover sewer backups. Not all policies have this coverage.



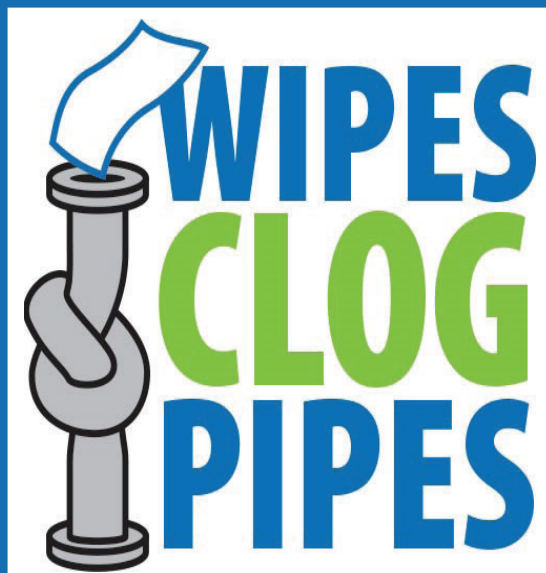
Backup Cleanup

Your insurance carrier might have suggestions on which service to use for cleaning larger backup issue, or you can look online.

See the back of this handout for information on how to cleanup smaller sewer backups yourself, including suggestions from the Minnesota Department of Health.



Help Prevent a Sewer Backup in Your Home



The following items should be disposed of in your trash can, NOT in the sanitary sewer system:

- Diapers
- Paper towels
- Cooking grease
- Food (do NOT use the disposal for all food items).

REMINDER:

Property owners are responsible for the maintenance, repair, and cleaning of the service line from the house to the city's main line.

Cleaning Your Sewer Backup

For large clean ups, you should call a cleaning service. Your insurance carrier might have suggestions on which service to use, or you can look online. For smaller backups, you may wish to clean the backup yourself with a solution of two tablespoons chlorine bleach in one gallon of water. To reduce health hazards, thoroughly clean the areas affected by the backup as soon as possible.

Cleaning a Smaller Backup Yourself

The Minnesota Department of Health suggests the following:

- Use outside air to dry your home.
- Open windows and doors and use an exhaust fan to remove moist air from the house.
- If available, use a room de-humidifier. Empty it often.
- 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 to prevent inhaling contaminated dust, especially if you have allergies. Consult your physician if you have questions.
- Open, clean, decontaminate, and thoroughly dry cavities in walls, floors, and ceilings.
- Release any water or mud that has been trapped in walls, ceilings or floor cavities.
- Allow walls to dry from the inside out.
- Remove moisture and debris from all surfaces and get surface materials dry within 24-48 hours.
- Remove all interior wall finishing materials and insulation.
- Throw out any wet insulation, moist plaster, wallboard and paneling.
- 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.

Contaminated Food

Throw out 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. Home-canned foods require additional care.

After the jars containing home-canned foods have been washed and disinfected, the jars should be boiled for 10 minutes before using.

Clothes/Household Items

- Line-dry all articles before attempting to clean or treat them.
- After drying, brush off loose dirt and debris.
- Send "Dry Clean Only" items to a professional cleaner.
- Wash clothes several times in cold water. Add up to a cup of bleach per load of wash if it will not harm the clothing.
- Rinse and dry all items as soon as possible.
- Throw out mattresses and pillows.

Wet Carpets

- Pull up waterlogged carpet immediately to prevent further floor damage.
- Carpet pads cannot be saved. Remove the pads and throw them away.
- Save carpets or throw rugs only if they expensive or hard to replace.
- Clean and dry your floors thoroughly before re-carpeting.

Wet Furniture

- Discard upholstered furniture if it has been exposed to water or contaminated material.
- Clean, rinse and disinfect wood furniture.
- Place wood furniture outside in a shady area so it will dry slowly.

Wet Hardwood Floors

- Remove all moisture or debris.
- Scrub floors and woodwork within 48 hours using a stiff brush, water, detergent and disinfectant.
- Allow all wood to dry thoroughly.

Wet Appliances

- If your hot water heater became wet due to flooding, it should be discarded. The insulation typically can't be replaced and the burner or heating element might become damaged and could cause an explosion or fire if used. If in doubt consult a service professional before using.
- If the furnace was flooded, have it inspected and serviced by a professional furnace service before using.