



If you experience a backup or back flow causing flood damage to your home, you should:

- Keep people and pets away from the affected area (s).
- Do not attempt to clean it yourself.
- Turn off central heat and air system and prevent flow from reaching floor vents.
- Call an experienced restoration company for cleanup and removal of affected surfaces.
- Leave items in the affected area for the experts to handle.
- Report a claim to your homeowner's insurance carrier.
- If you had recent plumbing work, contact your plumber or contractor.

General Guidelines

Due to the nature of a sewer system, in most instances the County will not reimburse property owners in the event they experience sewer backup. However, incidents relating to a sewer backup will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis in order to determine the County's liability for the damage and/or responsibility to reimburse the property owner.

WASHINGTON COUNTY WATER QUALITY
DEPARTMENT



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Sewer Backup Guide for Washington County Residents

The goal of the Washington County Water Quality Department is to provide quality **wastewater disposal service in a prompt, efficient and courteous manner to our customers.** Unfortunately, despite our best efforts, occasionally sewer backups do occur.

Tel: 240-313-2600
24hrs/day, 7 days/wk

What to expect and what to do.

A **backup** typically occurs in a home's plumbing system or lateral and will not cause damage if you immediately discontinue using the plumbing fixture(s) until the system is cleared. Most slow-moving drains, toilets, or backups can be remedied with drain cleaners or a plunger.

If your own methods fail, call a plumber. If the plumber establishes that the problem is not in your line, call the Washington County Water Quality Emergency # (240) 313-2600.



(24 hrs/day, 7 days/wk)

A **backflow** is much less common and occurs when water or materials come up through a drain, toilet or other fixture when the home's plumbing system is not being used. This in some cases may indicate that the County main is blocked and wastewater is backing up into your lateral line and home.

Appropriate personnel will be dispatched to investigate and remedy any problem in the County main or lateral maintained by the County. County personnel will advise and assist you if a backflow occurs due to an obstruction originating off the property.

Your responsibilities:

The homeowner is responsible for clearing any blockage in the home's plumbing system or maintained lateral and for any resulting damage to the structure. The homeowner is also responsible for damage occurring due to an improperly constructed lateral, including a lack of required backflow prevention devices or illegal hookups.

Please Remember:

Sanitary sewage is a health hazard. If you experience a backup, be very careful to avoid contact with sewer materials, which may carry infectious diseases such as hepatitis and salmonella. If you want professional help in cleaning, look in the Yellow Pages under Carpet Cleaning.



Service Calls

Upon notification of a sewer backup, a County employee will inspect the appropriate manholes to try to determine the cause of the blockage. The crew will perform routine maintenance on the County line at that time, regardless of whether or not a blockage is found. **There is no charge for us to check the County lines.**

If the problem is not within the County line, it will be necessary for you to contact a plumber to remove any blockage in your wastewater service line and you will be responsible for any charges relating to that service. If you are renting the property, you should immediately contact the property owner about a blockage in the private service line. Washington County is **not responsible for calling a plumber or for payment of a plumbing bill regarding a private line.**

Most, but not all, homeowner's insurance policies have coverage for sewer backups. Review your policy to be sure you have coverage. Endorsements to cover sewer backups have very reasonable annual premiums.