

How Do I Prevent A Backup?

- Deposit cooking grease, and rags in the trash.
- Ask your plumber about how to keep your house sewer line trouble free.
- Obtain a permit for all sewer line repairs or excavation.
- Use only a licensed contractor or plumber to make repairs.
- **Don't** plant trees near sewer lines.
- Know where your home's sewer cleanouts are located.
- **CAUTION**, Any homeowner who has a basement or plumbing located below the elevation of the next upstream manhole of the public sewer system should protect their home from sewage back flow by installing an approved backwater valve. Call the Water Reclamation Division for more information at 873-7015.

What Should I Do When There Is A Backup?

If you have determined that there is a backup in the sewer line, you can report it to the twenty-four hour **WaterEmergency Dispatch Office at 857-8250**

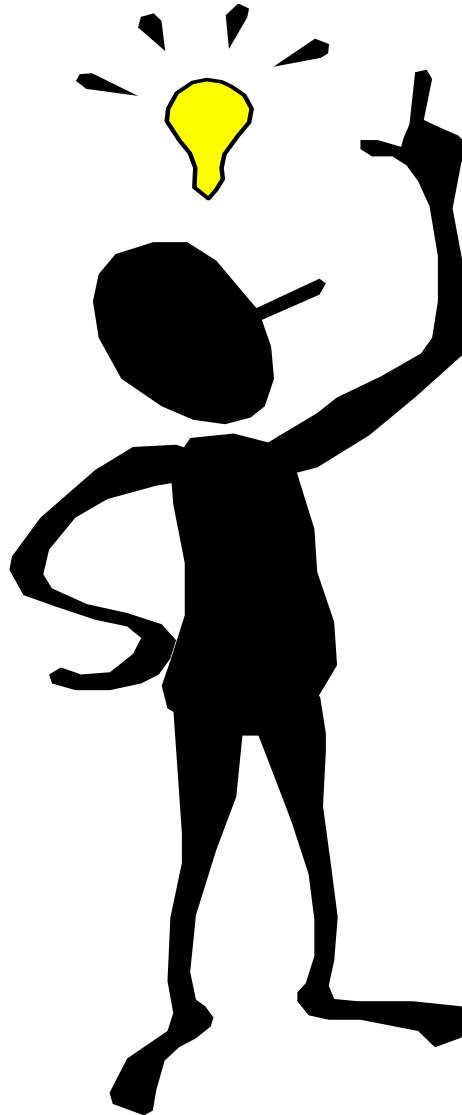
TTY Users may call New Mexico Relay at 1-800-659-8331.
This pamphlet is available in alternate formats on request.

Visit our web page at:

<http://www.abcwua.org/p2/>

Sources:

Carpinteria Sanitary District
Customer Information
<http://www.silcom.com/~csd/public.htm>.
City of Oklahoma
Water & Wastewater Utilities Department.
Sewer Backups What to Do.
Regional Water Quality Control Plant
City of Palo Alto
Get to the Root of the Problem



**SEWER
BACKUPS!**

**Water Utility
Water Reclamation Division**
4201 2nd St. SW
Albuquerque, NM 87105

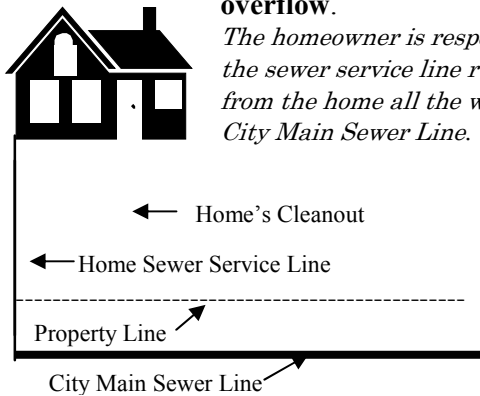


What's a Sewer Backup?



A sewer backup is caused by **an obstruction in a sewer pipe. This results in wastewater BACKING UP in the pipe, causing toilets, household drains or sewer manholes to overflow.**

The homeowner is responsible for the sewer service line running from the home all the way to the City Main Sewer Line.



Your home is connected by your private service line to the City's sanitary sewer system. The public system includes **1,650 miles** of pipe. After wastewater enters the system, it flows to the City's **Southside Water Reclamation Plant**. At the Plant, wastewater is treated and returned to the Rio Grande as clean, environmentally safe water. Approximately 60 million gallons of wastewater are processed at the Southside Water Reclamation Plant every day.

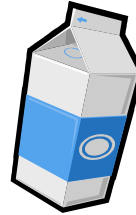
Residential users discharge approximately 85% of the total wastewater received at the treatment plant. The majority of sewer backup problems that occur are residential.

What Causes Sewer Backups?

The three common culprits that cause backups are grease, roots, and rags.

Grease:

Dispose of grease and fats with your trash, not down the sink drain! Grease in drains collects and hardens into a plug. Pouring grease down the drain and flushing with hot water is not the solution, as grease is simply moved down the collection system and may cause backups further down the line.



- Pour grease into empty coffee cans or milk cartons. Allow grease to harden then put the container in the trash.

Roots:

Roots grow toward breaks or cracks in sewer lines in search of water. Inside the pipe, roots form balls that clog the sewer line.

- Plant trees away from sewer lines.
- Call a plumber or a root removal specialist to remove roots.
- Repair breaks in sewer line.

Rags:

Rags form balls or get caught on roots and can immediately cause clogged sewer lines.

- DON'T throw rags into toilets, clean outs or open drains.
- DO dispose of rags with household trash.

Why Should I Care About Sewer Backups?

As a homeowner and taxpayer you should be concerned about sewer backups because:

- Sewer backups can cause extensive damage to your home and to the homes of your neighbors.
- They result in hundreds of thousands of dollars being spent for clean up.



What Should I Do If My Sewer Line Becomes Plugged?

- Inspect all drains to locate and identify problems(s).
- Contact a neighbor to see if they are also having sewer line trouble. If they are, call the City's Water Emergency Dispatch Office at 857-8250.



How Can I Minimize Damage?

- Refrain from flushing toilets, washing dishes, or draining sinks/baths/showers. Water that goes down one drain can come out of another drain.
- Until the blockage is located, it may be necessary to turn off water valves to prevent unintentional addition of water to the sewer system.

Tips to Assist You When You Are Having Sewer Backup Problems:

- First locate your sewer cleanouts
- If your sewer main is in front of your house, the cleanouts will be located in front, if your sewer main is in the back, your cleanouts will be in back of your house.
- Inspect cleanouts to determine if there is a sewer backup.
- Remove the cap at the top of the cleanout pipe.
- Look down the pipe with a flashlight...
- If there is a low water level, it implies the home sewer line is open and free flowing. The blockage is probably inside your home. Call your plumber.
- If there is a high water level in the cleanout, the sewer line is blocked. Call the City's Water Emergency Dispatch Office at 857-8250.
- City crews will determine if the blockage is in the City main sewer line or the home sewer service line and contact you to let you know if they have corrected the problem or if you must call your plumber.