



## Preventing Sewer Back Ups

Sewer back ups are not only unpleasant and inconvenient, but they can also result in costly damage. Here are a few simple steps to help prevent the problem from occurring on your property.

- **Routine Maintenance:** Regular maintenance of your lateral line will prevent obstructed flow. This is the outside piping that takes water and waste from your house to the City sewer line. Roots from trees, large shrubs, and plants are attracted to water; so, if your lateral line is cracked, roots will gravitate towards the water source, enter the line, and eventually interfere with the flow. Other factors that can affect flow are the age and material of your lateral line.
- **Backwater Valve:** A backwater valve can be installed onto some lateral lines to prevent sewage from backing up from main lines into a private lateral. Homes, businesses, and other structures with drainage fixtures such as shower pans, tubs, toilets, or sink rims located below the elevation of the nearest upstream manhole cover are required to install and maintain an approved backwater valve. Installing a backwater valve requires a permit. Contact a licensed plumber to determine the need for this device. If you already have a backwater valve, call a licensed plumber to verify that it is in good working order.

### Helpful Tips

- ✓ Do not put bulky paper or trash into the sewers through toilets or sinks; back-ups in your sewer lateral line can result, because the line can be as small as three inches in diameter.
- ✓ Do not dispose of oil, fat, or grease into the sewer through toilets or sinks. Food left on plates can have a lot of grease with it, scrape it to the garbage – don't put it down the garbage disposal. Cooking grease should be poured into a heat resistant container too cool and solidify and then disposed of in the garbage.

If you are not the property owner and want to protect against potential uninsurable damage to your personal property, share these maintenance and preventive tips with your landlord, manager, or the property owner. For questions or more information, contact a licensed plumber or Water Resources at 564-5413. For permit information, contact Building and Safety at 564-5485. If you notice a manhole overflowing, please report it right away. Call 546-5413.