



PREVENTING SEWER BACK UPS WITH THESE HELPFUL TIPS

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 sewer back ups. This device is required by law under certain circumstances. Homes, businesses, and other structures with drainage fixtures, such as shower pans, tubs, toilets, or sink rims located below the elevation of the next 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 or a suitable alternative. If you already have a backwater valve, call a licensed plumber to verify that it is in good working order.

HELPFUL TIPS

a 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.

a Do not put bulky paper or trash into storm drains; these items clog the drains and can cause or increase flooding.

a Do not dispose of oil, fat, or grease into the sewer through toilets or sinks. Do not dispose of oil, fat, or grease in storm drains. It is a violation of the Municipal Code to dispose of these materials – regardless of the source – through a sewer or storm drain. Commercial operations such as restaurants are required to have a grease trap. Industrial waste generators are required to install a pre-treatment facility to process waste prior to disposal.

a 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 the City Water Resources Division at 564-5413. For permit information, contact the Building and Safety Division at 564-5485.