



CITY OF SHEBOYGAN
PUBLIC WORKS

COPING WITH A SEWAGE BACKUP

If you are experiencing a sewer problem,
please report a **SEWER EMERGENCY**
by calling the Department of Public Works

920.459.3440
M-F 7:30A-4:00P

920.459.3333
AFTERHOURS



If sewage is backing up from plumbing fixtures or drains, stop using water in your home (such as the shower or washing machine). If the backup stops, it is likely that your private lateral sewer is blocked and you might be able to restore

drainage by rooting or jetting the line. This kind of problem is the homeowner's responsibility.

If sewage is backing up into your home when you are not using water in your home, there could be a blockage in the municipal sewer main. Call the City of Sheboygan Public Works Department immediately for assistance at 920.459.3440 or 920.459.3333 after-hours. Backed up sewer lines, line breaks, sewage odors, and overflowing manholes are considered an emergency.

When a sewage backup is occurring, do not use your toilet, shower, washing machine, or other appliances that send water down a drain.

First things first! After a sewage backup, do these things right away:

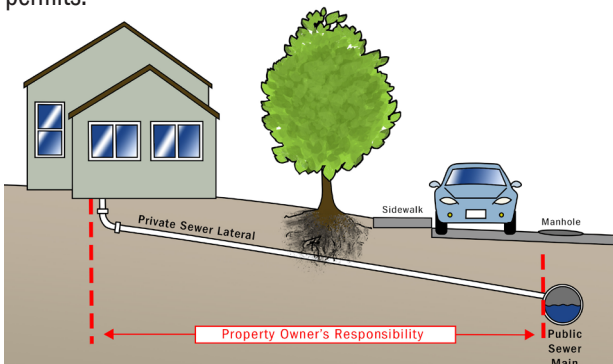
1. Do not use water in your home
2. Keep children and pets away from sewage
3. Turn off power if there is standing water or the possibility of electrical wires coming into contact with water
4. Call the Department of Public Works to report the emergency and have the sewer main checked.
5. Call a private service provider (rooter company or plumber) if you have slow drainage or suspect a blockage in the lateral.
6. Call homeowner's insurance provider.

What is a Sewer Lateral?

A sewer lateral or house lateral is the pipeline between the City sanitary sewer main, usually located in the street, and the building. The sewer lateral is owned and maintained by the property owner, including any part extending into the street or public right of way.

More often than not, the cause of a backup in your lateral is from items that the line is not meant to handle. Another possible cause would be roots in your lateral. The lateral is the responsibility of the owner of the property from the house to the street.

The property owner is fully responsible for maintaining adequate sewage flow through the sewer lateral and into the City's sewer main, including the connection on the sewer main. When a sewer lateral failure or stoppage occurs, the City crews will respond only to check the sewer main to verify that the main is open and sewage is flowing. **If the sewer main is found to be clear, it is the property owner's responsibility to call a licensed plumber or drain cleaning service to correct the problem.** Locating the lateral is also the responsibility of the property owner. The City of Sheboygan Building Inspection Department has records showing these lateral lines' location through filed plumbing permits.



What is a Sewer Main?

A sewer main is the municipal owned sewer system that carries wastewater from all the private laterals to the wastewater treatment facility. These sewer mains are often found in the street or within the right of way. The City is responsible for the maintenance of the sewer main.

How to Prevent Sewage Backups

Property owners should follow these recommendations as “Best Management Practices” to aid in the prevention of the sewer lateral from becoming blocked.

- **ROOTS** seeking moisture, will make their way into sewer line cracks. After some time, this causes your sewer line to break, which allows debris to hang up in the line, thus causing a backup. One way to prevent roots from entering your line is to replace your line and tap with a new plastic pipe. If you have continuing problems with tree roots in your lateral, you may have to have them cut out periodically.
- **SEWER ODOR** Another concern that property owners have is that they can smell sewer odors inside their house or building. Under each drain in your plumbing system is a “P-Trap.” If there is water in this pitting, odors or gases from the sewer cannot enter through the drain from either the property owner’s lateral or the City main. Periodically check to ensure that unused floor drains, sinks, etc. have water in the “P-Trap.” Another way to prevent sewer odor is to ensure that the vents located on your roof are free from bird nests, leaves, etc. When these vents are clear, the sewer odors will escape through these vents.
- **ILLEGAL PLUMBING CONNECTIONS** Do not connect French drains, sump pumps, and other flood control systems to your sanitary sewer. It is unlawful, and debris and silt will clog your line. Consult a plumber to correct any illegal connections.
- **INSTALL A BACKWATER PREVENTION VALVE** which is a fixture installed into a sewer line, and sometimes into a drain line, in your building’s basement to prevent sewer back-flows that can significantly reduce the possibility of a sewage backup. A properly installed and maintained backwater valve works on a one-way system; sewage can go out but cannot come back in. Property owners are responsible for the installation and maintenance of backwater valves. A qualified plumber can assist you in determining your needs.

How to Clean Up

It is important to act quickly to protect undamaged property and to clean dry and affected property. Wash affected areas with a detergent solution to remove surface dirt and contamination and allow to air-dry. Apply a disinfectant to sanitize surfaces.

- **Wear rubber gloves and boots**
- **Wash your hands with soap and water**
- **Removed undamaged items from the area**
- **Extract water from carpet and pad with a wet-dry vacuum so it can be removed more easily**
- **Clothing and linens that you would like to save should be laundered as soon as possible**
- **Sanitize the surfaces of concrete, wood, metal or other non-porous materials that will not be damaged by household chlorine bleach with no more than 10% bleach and water**
- **Use non-bleach sanitizing products to clean fabrics, leather, or other materials that will be affected by bleach**
- **Use fans and heat to dry the area and personal property thoroughly**
- **Flush out and disinfect plumbing fixtures**
- **Clean up appliances or ductwork**
- **Dispose of any contaminated porous materials like cardboard, carpets and carpet pads, cosmetics, food, mattresses and pillows, medical supplies, stuffed animals and toys, unfinished furniture, upholstered furniture, wallboard, and anything else that is difficult to clean**



Scan the QR Code for full details on sewage backup prevention and clean up

NO ONE WANTS THEIR SEWAGE BACK



Do not dispose of grease or cooking oil, diapers, feminine products, needles, paper towels or wipes down the pipes, even if the packaging says they are flushable.

These items belong in the trash or sharps container!