

SEWER BACKUP PREVENTION BEST PRACTICES



When a resident reports a sewer backup, they often assume it is from the main connection. An agency may respond to the sewer backup by replacing the house connection from the main line to a little behind the curb.

While this action will most likely resolve the current sewer backup, the question is, will this prevent it from happening again and address the real cause?

Closed-Circuit Video (CCV) of lateral sewer lines can identify the cause of the backup and responsibility by determining if the backup was from the main or lateral lines. Throughout the years, if multiple sewer backup claims at the same residence

and the lateral lines were videoed after the first backup, the cause and responsibility could have been properly determined, thus possibly eliminating additional claims in the future.

An additional benefit of using the CCV during the preliminary investigation of a backup is the agency can identify the most affordable repair solution possible.

The photo shown above was obtained from an agency that responded to a sewer backup at a residential home for the second time in two years. The resident contended that grease accumulation was the result of the main backup. After the second repair, the agency videoed the lateral line and proved the grease accumulation was the result of the actions of the resident. The six-inch house lateral sewer line was over 90% blocked by grease accumulation. The photo taken by CCV was provided to the resident, and the agency informed them they would not be responsible for any future blockages caused by the resident.

It is important to note the agency will need to acquire written permission from the homeowner to video the house lateral line from the inside of the home to the street (curb). The release should include wording to the effect "For work performed on behalf of the homeowner" and a disclaimer in the event something happens to the agency's equipment while on private property. The release form should be reviewed by your agency's attorney before being used.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT PREVENT SEWER BACKUPS IN THE HOME

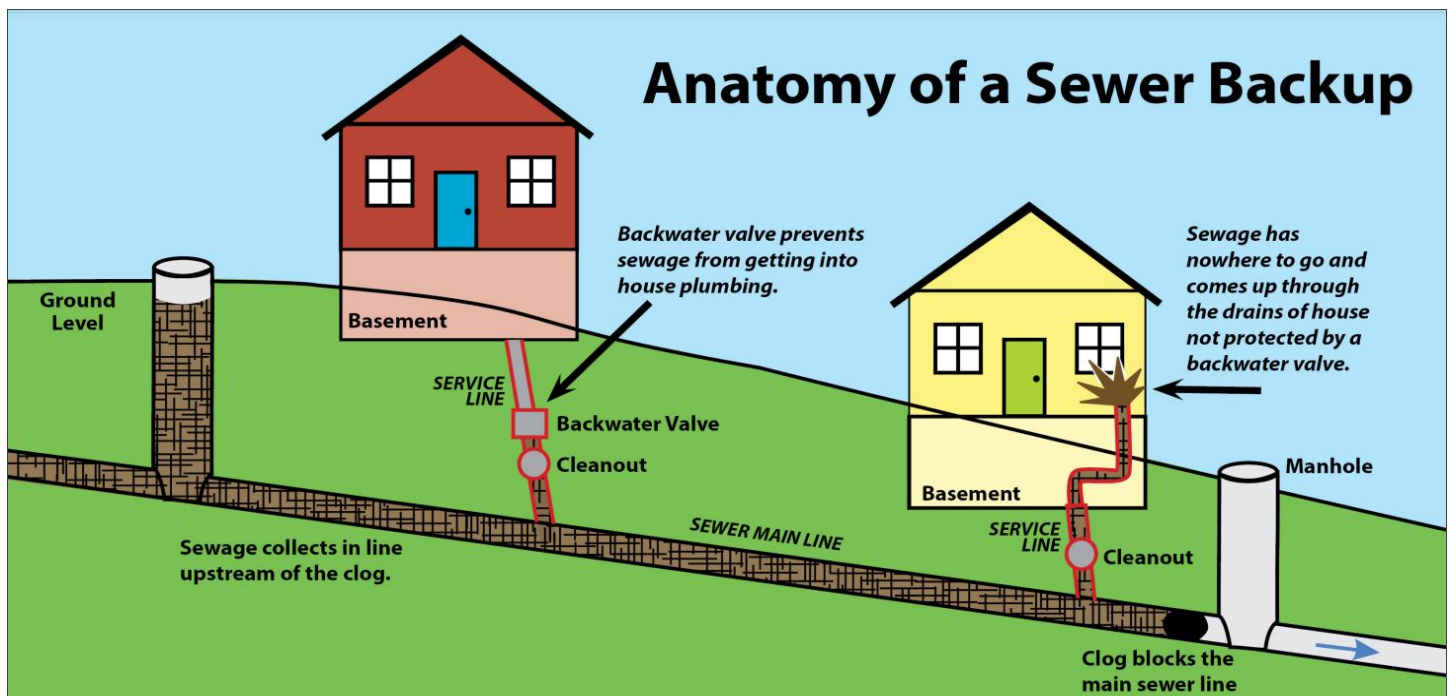
Most sewer backups in a home are caused by improper disposal of waste into toilets and drains. The following items should **NOT** be discarded into toilets or drains:

- Fats,
- Oils or Grease from Cooking
- Solid Food Particles
- Diapers
- Baby Wipes
- Feminine Hygiene Products
- Paper Towels

These items do not break down in the sewer pipes and will cause backups in homes. The improper disposal of these items will create serious maintenance and health issues for the homeowner and the wastewater collection and treatment systems.

When fats, oils, or grease are poured down a sink, these products will solidify once they have cooled down in the sewer pipes and cause a blockage. If you think running hot water in the sink will help disperse this matter, you're wrong! Hot water may get this matter out of your sink drain, but as soon as the water cools down, these products will solidify in your sewer pipes. This build-up will restrict flow and accumulate in the pipes, which in combination with other materials that shouldn't be flushed, will cause sewerage to back up into a home and often cause blockages in the main sewer system located in the street.

Residents should be aware that some of these products are labeled as 'Flushable' but are only assumed to be. A vast majority of these products do not break down like toilet paper and create problems in households and the collection system, pumping stations, and wastewater treatment facilities.



¹ <https://www.greensboro-nc.gov/departments/water-resources/customer-service-for-residents-and-businesses/sanitary-sewer-backup-policy>