

HELP PREVENT BACKUPS

- **NEVER** flush down the toilet, or put down your sink, any items that will not dissolve or break up in water. Items such as paper towels, diapers, baby wipes, sanitary napkins, dental floss, rags, disinfectant wipes, etc. should go in the garbage, even if they say they are flushable.
- **NEVER** pour fats, oils, or grease (FOG) down the drain. Collect grease in a container (a soup can works great) and throw it in the garbage. Place food scraps in garbage bags for trash disposal. Home garbage disposals do not keep grease out of the plumbing system. Detergents that claim to dissolve grease only help grease pass further down the line and cause problems in other areas. Eventually, it will congeal and harden to cause a blockage.
- **NEVER** pour any leftover paints, oils, pharmaceuticals or other hazardous materials down your sink, toilet, or storm drain.
- As a preventive measure, clean your sanitary sewer lateral to remove roots, grease, rags, etc. regularly to ensure it is free-flowing.



- Homeowners sometimes store valuable items in their basements. If they must be stored in the basement, keep items in waterproof containers and off the floor.
- Check with your insurance agent (or company) to review your homeowner's coverage. Sewer / wastewater backup coverage may require an addition to your homeowner's policy.
- Remember, "Only rain in the storm drain" ... and "Think before you pour it down the sink."

This brochure was prepared by Akron Water Reclamation Services and is intended to be general information only.

For more information, please visit our website at:



www.akronohio.gov/sewer

City of Akron
Water Reclamation Services
Sewer Maintenance Division
2460 Akron-Peninsula Road
Akron, OH 44313
Phone: (330) 375-2666



Sewer Trouble or Questions?

Call the Sewer Maintenance
Division first at (330) 375-2666

Be careful!

A flooded basement caused by a sewer backup poses a risk of electrical shock, and flood water may contain bacteria harmful to your health.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. WHAT IS A SANITARY SEWER LATERAL?

A. A sanitary sewer lateral is the underground pipe that connects a residence or business to the publicly owned main sewer.

Q. WHAT ARE MY SANITARY SEWER LATERAL MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITIES?

A. Per Ordinance #806-1992, **ALL** property owners are responsible for maintenance and upkeep of the entire (from the building to the City's main sewer) sanitary sewer lateral which includes keeping it free of roots, grease, rags, etc.

Q. I SMELL SEWER ODORS IN MY BASEMENT, WHAT SHOULD I DO?

A. Call our Utilities Dispatcher at (330) 375-2666 and explain the problem. Sewer Maintenance will check the main sewer in the street to see if there is a blockage in the line. This service is offered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Odors are often the result of dry P-traps or missing or broken cleanout caps located in the house or building.

Q. THERE IS WATER COMING FROM THE BASEMENT FLOOR DRAIN, WHAT SHOULD I DO?

A. Stop using plumbing fixtures and appliances that drain to the sewer and call our Utilities Dispatcher at (330) 375-2666 and explain the problem. Sewer Maintenance may check the main sewer in the street to see if there is a blockage. This service is offered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Q. WHAT IF THE CITY OF AKRON'S MAIN SEWER IS OKAY?

A. The property owner should hire a licensed, reputable sewer cleaning contractor (obtain references from family or neighbors, if possible) to identify the problem and clear the blockage or obstruction in the sewer lateral. The contractor should also clean the entire lateral.

Q. WHAT CAUSED THE SEWER BACKUP?

A. Most often, a sewer backup is caused by a plugged sanitary sewer lateral. Over time, tree roots, grease, rags or other debris can build up in the lateral eventually causing a blockage. Sometimes the lateral has actually collapsed.

Q. WHO IS RESPONSIBLE IF THE LATERAL HAS COLLAPSED?

A. Residential Properties: 1) property owners are responsible for structural repairs located on private property; 2) the City of Akron is responsible for structural repairs located in the public right-of-way.

A. Commercial Properties: property owners are responsible for structural repairs throughout the entire length of the lateral.

Q. WHAT DO I DO IF THE LATERAL HAS COLLAPSED ?

A. The property owner should hire a licensed, reputable sewer repair contractor (obtain references from family or neighbors, if possible).

Q. HOW DO I CLEANUP THE MESS IF A BACKUP OCCURS?

A. **THINK SAFETY FIRST!** Use rubber gloves, rubber boots, goggles, and mouth protection when cleaning contaminated surfaces and be wary of porous materials such as drywall and carpet. Be careful not to track contaminants to other areas of your home. Consider consulting a professional property restoration company.

Q. TO WHOM AND WHEN ARE LATERAL INSPECTION APPOINTMENTS AVAILABLE?

A. FREE sanitary sewer lateral inspections are available to both residential and commercial property owners. The sanitary sewer lateral must be open and flowing in order to perform a thorough inspection. Appointments can be made by calling (330) 375-2666.

Q. QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR AKRON WATER OR SEWER BILL?

A. Call the Utilities Business Office at (330) 375-2554 Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

