



HEALTH RISKS

Raw sewage may contain bacteria, viruses, and other pollutants that can cause disease and contaminate property. Health risk factors to individuals depends on:

1. The amount of sewage that enters the property.
2. The types of germs/contaminants
3. The length of time sewage has been in contact with materials in your home or business.
4. How much contact you came into with the sewage and the duration of your exposure.

LEGAL

Baltimore City is not liable for unforeseen events, including flood damage or sewage backups. For legal clarification on matters related to a sewage backup or flooding, or to file a claim, please contact the Baltimore City Law Department at 410-396-3400. The Law Department will investigate claims for merit, but filing a claim is NOT a guarantee of reimbursement.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION NOTICE

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's External Civil Rights Compliance Office (ECRCO) is responsible for enforcing several civil rights laws which, together, prohibit discrimination against the public on the basis of race, color, or national origin (including on the basis of limited English proficiency), sex, disability and age by applicants for and recipients of federal financial assistance from EPA. The Baltimore City Department of Public Works (DPW) is a recipient of federal financial assistance. As such, any aid, benefit or service that DPW provides must be administered in a nondiscriminatory manner.

DPW takes all allegations of discrimination seriously. If you feel that you have been discriminated against you may file a complaint of discrimination. Allegations of discrimination based on the components listed above will be investigated by the DPW Office of Equity and Civil Rights. Complaints must be filed with the Department within 180 days of the alleged discriminatory act.

Please direct all inquiries to:

Baltimore City Department of Public Works
Office of Equity and Civil Rights
ATTN: Equity Coordinator
200 Holliday Street, Baltimore MD 21202

You may also direct inquiries to 410-396-3310.



BALTIMORE CITY
Department of Public Works

UNDERSTANDING AND PREVENTING SEWAGE BACKUPS

PUBLICWORKS.BALTIMORECITY.GOV
Call 311 to Report Backups

The Baltimore City Department of Public Works (DPW) prepared this brochure to provide customers with information regarding sewage backups and how to prevent them.

The term sewage backup describes what happens when water comes up or is pushed into your home through the pipes from sewer or drainage systems. Dealing with a sewage backup is one of the most hazardous and challenging incidents a homeowner can face.

Sewage backups have two primary causes:

- **Pipe blockages or failures.** These problems can be caused by inappropriate disposal of waste like fats/oils/grease (FOG) or wipes/rags/sanitary products. They may also be caused by root intrusion or pipe deterioration.
- **Stormwater and groundwater entering your sewer system during wet weather.** These flows may occur directly (through illegal connections) or indirectly (through cracks and loose joints).



STEPS TO AVOID A SEWAGE BACKUP

- Do not flush grease, rags, disposable diapers, wipes, personal sanitary items, or similar waste.
- Do not plant trees or bushes near sewer lines or laterals. Their roots may grow into the lines and create future blockages.
- Disconnect downspouts and sump pumps from your house connection.
- Hire a licensed plumber to install an exterior cleanout (shown above).
- Consider having a backflow preventer and/or grinder pump installed at your property.

PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY

All properties should install an exterior sewer cleanout in accordance with Baltimore City code. An exterior cleanout provides an easy access point to fix your main line sewer issue at ground level.

If a problem occurs in the house connection and an exterior cleanout is not available, you must hire a licensed plumber to assess and resolve the problem.

- Consider purchasing a sewer backup rider for your insurance policy.
- Consider purchasing an extended warranty for your pipes – the City partners with HomeServe USA to offer low cost, extended warranties.

Visit www.homeserveusa.com for more information.

Typical Sewer House Connection

