



## **Sewer Backups**

### **What causes sewer backups?**

Most sewer backups happen when the sewer service line is plugged or requires maintenance. They may also occur when the entire sewer system is overwhelmed by a higher than normal volume of water, such as during heavy rainfall or flood events.

### **What is a backflow prevention device?**

A backflow valve is a check valve that only allows water to flow in one direction. When a backflow condition occurs, the valve gate closes and prevents backflow from the sewer main from coming back into your home.

Backflow valves must be correctly installed and regularly maintained in order to work properly. Manufacturer's recommendations for maintenance should be followed.

In addition, it is important to remember that if your backflow device is working and stopping backflow from coming into your home (for example, because of a heavy rainfall or other event that places pressure on the sewer system), it will also prevent sewer from leaving the home. If the backflow gate is closed and you are running a lot of water in your home, it may start coming out through the lowest available fixture instead.

### **Does the City require backflow prevention devices?**

The Water & Sewer Bylaw states that if you make a claim for damages related to a sewer backup, you need to install a backflow prevention device within 30 days to prevent a future incident. However, we do not otherwise require their installation. It is recommended as a good practice, and your insurance policy may require that you have one installed.

### **Does the City pay for damages or clean up from sewer backups?**

We recommend calling your insurance company if any damages have occurred. Many insurance policies cover damages for sewer backups. Your insurance coverage may be more extensive than what you could recover from the City and may be the quickest way to recover costs. Your insurance company can then pursue any other party they believe to be responsible for the damage.

You may still make a claim directly against the City. However, the onus will be on you to demonstrate the City's negligence.

### **What should I do if there is a sewer backup?**

Please call the Public Works Department at 306-236-6240 to report the problem during regular hours. If your backup happens after hours, call City Hall at 306-236-3622 and press 9 to be transferred to the afterhours emergency reporting number.

You may be able to reduce the amount of back up by minimizing the amount of water run through your plumbing until after you are able to have the sewer inspected.