

Customer Care

Taking Care of the Plumbing on Your Property

A sewer back up occurs when a sewer line becomes blocked. A blockage can occur on your property or City property, causing a backup through floor drains and toilets on the lower levels of a home or business.

What To Do

- Report sewer backups immediately by calling 311. Sewer backup complaints are investigated within 24 hours. If a blockage is suspected, Water Utility workers will be sent to your property.
- DO NOT walk through standing water if there is even the slightest chance that it is in contact with the electrical current serving your property (i.e. outlets or connected appliances are submerged, etc.)

Until a maintenance crew arrives, a property owner should do the following:

- Cut off all electrical power to the flooded area.
- Stop use of all water.
- Make sure toilets are not running.
- Make sure floor drains are not blocked.
- Ventilate the flooded area.
- Remove property from the flooded area if possible and only if safe from electrical hazard.
- Locate your exterior clean-out to assist maintenance crews when they arrive.

When maintenance crews arrive, they will:

- need access to the exterior cleanout on your property to remove any possible blockages.
- try to resolve any possible blockage in the service connection or on the public side of the main sewer line.
- check area manholes for flow, visible signs of sewer leakage or overflows.

Your Cleanout

Your cleanout is a capped pipe, usually located near the property line, that rises from your sewer line.

Know the location of your sewer line clean out. For many residential properties, this is located out front. Always keep your cleanout visible and accessible.

- DPW is only responsible for clearing a blockage on the city side of service.
- Without an exterior cleanout DPW cannot attempt to remove a blockage from the service line.
- Crews cannot and will not enter your property to clear a blockage from the inside.

For more information, call 311 or email publicworks@baltimorecity.gov.

cleanwaterbaltimore
www.cleanwaterbaltimore.org



Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Mayor



Alfred H. Foxx
Director



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Bureau Head



Cleaning Up

Clean up should begin as soon as the overflow is under control.

Advice:

- 💧 Avoid direct contact with overflow water—protect hands and skin with gloves, rubber boots, long sleeves, pants, and a protective safety mask or goggles.
- 💧 Completely dewater the area and dispose of that water into a toilet or sink. DO NOT dump the water outside.
- 💧 Dispose of furniture, floor coverings or other soaked debris via Baltimore City Bulk Trash service OR by taking it to one of the City's Citizen Drop Off Centers. (Call 311 to schedule bulk pick up or to find the nearest drop off center.)
- 💧 Disinfect the floor and wall surfaces.
- 💧 Air-dry flooded areas after disinfection.

Although DPW is not responsible for any cleaning or debris removal, we will remove as much sewer water as we can with pumps. We will not move or remove any items from a house.

Prevent Backups

- 💧 DO NOT plant trees near sewer lines.
- 💧 DO NOT connect drains or sump pumps to the sewer system.
- 💧 DO NOT dispose of fats, oils and grease (FOG) in sinks or toilets.
- 💧 DO NOT flush rags, paper towels or other sanitary items down your toilet.

DO:

- 💧 Periodically add root-growth preventative to your drains.
- 💧 Install and maintain a backflow valve on the lowest drain line on your property.
- 💧 Modify plumbing to pump toilets and other drains to an upper level drain line—eliminating low level drains all together.
- 💧 Use a reputable, licensed plumber!