

What should I do if I have a serious sewer backup event?

- 1** Carefully try to carefully close as many drains as you can, using care with ceramic plumbing fixtures.
- 2** Don't run any water down any drain in your home until the clogs are cleared.
- 3** Check if neighbors are having any issues. This could indicate that the problem exists in the main line.
- 4** Call a plumber to assist with clearing the issue, closing your drains, and assessing the situation.
- 5** Call your utility to report the issue. They'll recommend action and check the main line for issues.
- 6** Call your homeowners' insurance company to determine what coverage may be available.

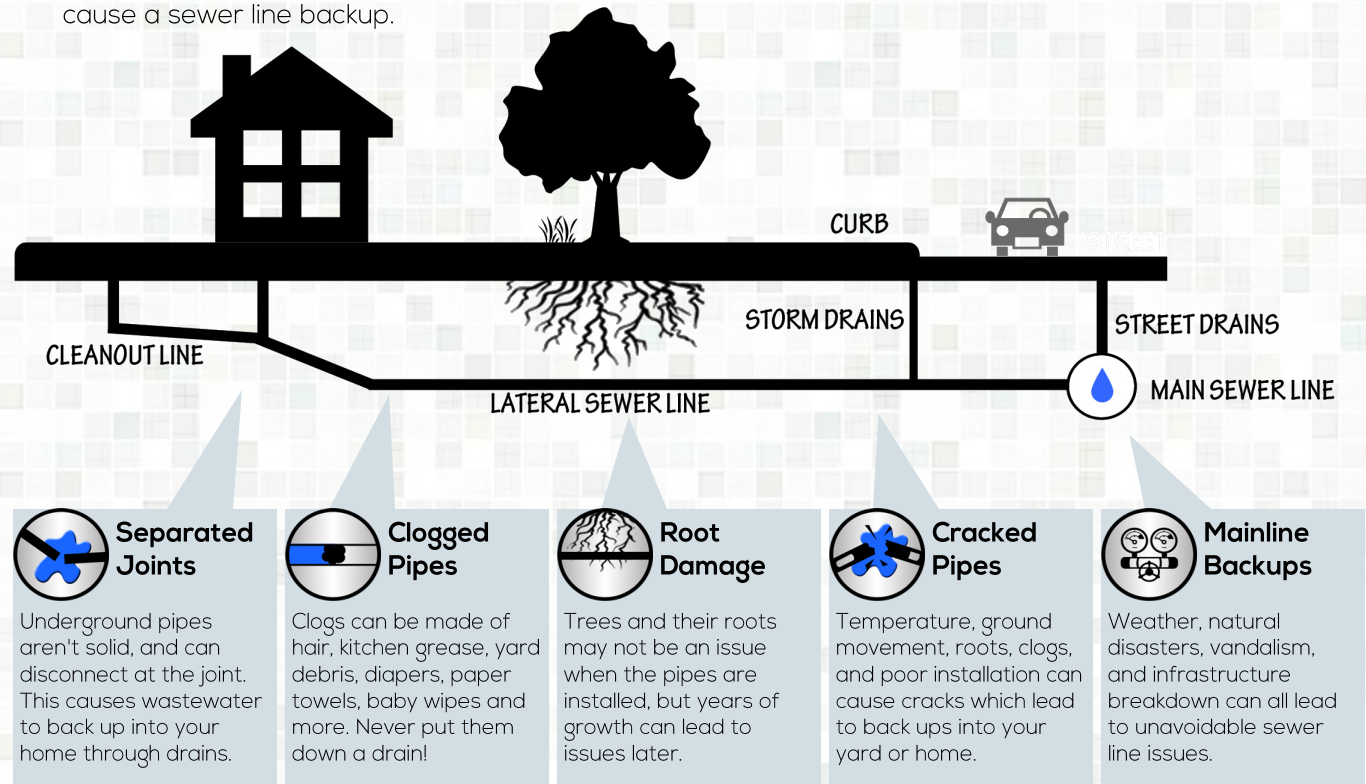
Who pays to clean up the mess?

In the vast majority of cases, you do. If the backup occurs in your service line or in the main line as a result of anything other than the utility's negligence, **it is your responsibility** to clean up the mess and restore the line.

Your utility is **not responsible** for your lines, or for acts of nature or vandalism. In many cases, the utility will coordinate clean up with a cleaning service to help minimize the damage, but the financial responsibility probably lies with you.

What Causes a Sewer Backup?

This diagram shows a typical home's lateral service lines, and explains some of the things that can cause a sewer line backup.



What can I do to safeguard my home from a sewer backup?

- Plumbers can assess your risk and install a back-flow valve to protect basements.
- You can use grease-fighting liquid dish soap like Dawn® to break up grease blockages.
- Review the list on this flyer of items to never flush or wash down a drain.
- Make sure your homeowners insurance policy includes coverage for sewer backups

What are utilities doing to prevent these issues?

Unfortunately, even with regular scheduled maintenance, some backups are simply unavoidable. These include events caused by vandalism, infrastructure breakdown, ground movement, and natural disaster.

Fortunately, most utilities use industry Best Practices to maintain sewer systems and lessen the risk of a stoppage. This includes video or physical inspections, the use of degreasing chemicals, and cleaning.