

How to prevent a Sewer Backup or Backflow?

Tips for Homeowners and Renters

Sanitary sewer systems are designed to handle three types of waste products: used water, human body waste, and toilet paper.

To Prevent Backups:

- **DO NOT** pour grease, fats, and oils from cooking down the drain.
- **DO NOT** use the sewer to dispose of food scraps.
- **DO NOT** use the toilet as a wastebasket for garbage and chemicals.
- **DO NOT** put “flushable wipe” products down the drain.
- **DO NOT** flush feminine hygiene products down the drain.

Do the following to Prevent Backups:

- ✓ **DO:** Collect grease in a container and dispose of it in the garbage.
- ✓ **DO:** Place food scraps in the garbage and dispose of it in the garbage.
- ✓ **DO:** Place a wastebasket in the bathroom to dispose of solid waste, feminine products and “flushable wipes.”

Special Tips:

Avoid planting trees with shallow, spreading root systems near your sewer lateral. The roots seek water sources.

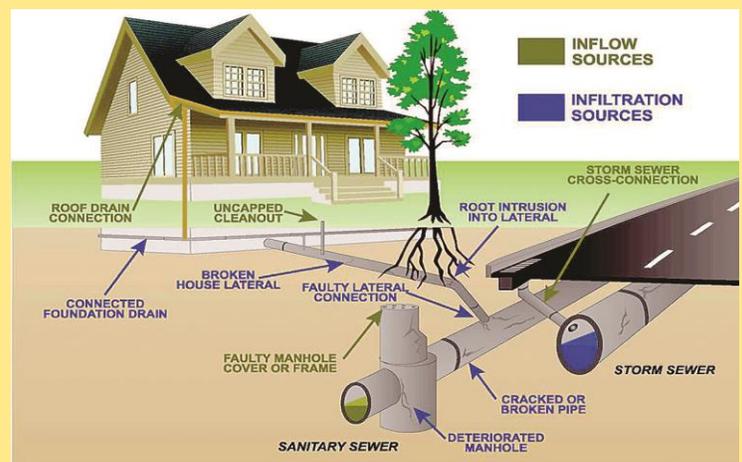
Install and maintain a backflow device and a cleanout.

If a backup or backflow causes flooding in your home

- ✓ Turn off central heat and air-conditioning systems and prevent flow from reaching floor vents by using towels or blankets as a berm.
- ✓ Do not attempt to clean it yourself.
- ✓ Leave items in the affected area for the experts to handle.
- ✓ Call an experienced restoration company for cleanup and removal of affected surfaces.
- ✓ Keep people and pets away from the affected area(s).
- ✓ Report a claim to your homeowner's insurance carrier.
- ✓ If you had recent plumbing work, contact your plumber or contractor.
- ✓ If you have a claim against the city, file your claim as soon as possible.

Potential Sewer Problems

A **backup** typically occurs in a home's plumbing system or lateral and will not cause damage if you discontinue using the plumbing fixtures until the system is cleared. Most slow-moving drains, toilets, or backups can be remedied with drain cleaners or a plunger. If your own methods fail, call a plumber. If the plumber establishes that the problem is not in your line, call the City of Salinas Waste Water Division at 831-758-7233 or after hours at 911



A **backflow** may mean that the city main is blocked and wastewater is backing up into your lateral line and home. If you experience a backflow, call City of Salinas at 831-758-7103 or after hours 911.

When you submit a Sewer Claim

- Appropriate personnel will be dispatched to investigate and remedy any problem in the city main.
- The homeowner is responsible for clearing any blockage in the home's plumbing system or maintained lateral and for any resulting flooding damage to the structure.
- The homeowner is also responsible for damage occurring due to an improperly constructed lateral, including a lack of required backflow prevention devices or illegal hookups.
- The City will provide advice and assistance if a backflow occurs due to an obstruction originating from the city.