



Is Your Sewer System Backed Up?

Grand Rapids Environmental Services Department

What should I do if I'm experiencing a Sanitary sewer backup?

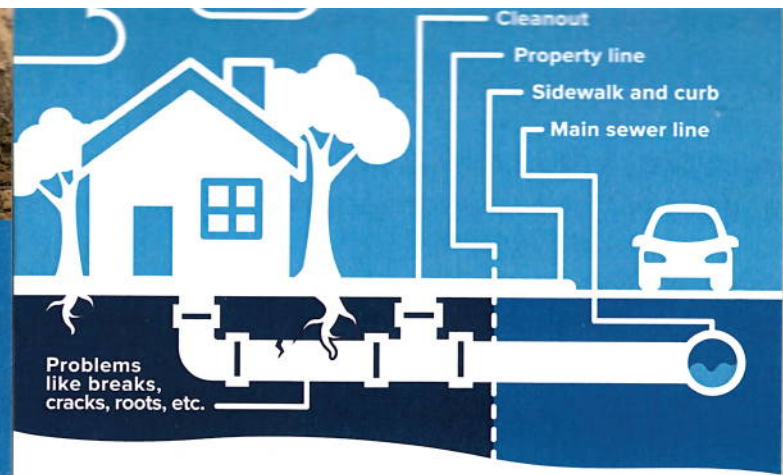
Call 311 - A maintenance crew will respond usually within 2-4 hours. Once a crew gets there, they will work to determine where the issue is in your sewer system. If it's a pipe that needs repair on the street side of the property line or a blockage in the City's main, it's a City issue. If it's a cleaning issue in any part of the pipe running between your house and main sewer line or a pipe that needs repair between the house and the property line, it's your responsibility to get it repaired. Calling a private plumber as well as 311 is recommended to have the quickest response in case it is your responsibility.

If the repair is your responsibility, you can have it done by a plumber or sewer cleaner. For insurance purposes, document the damage and take photos before cleanup. You are **highly** encouraged to maintain an insurance policy that covers sanitary sewer overflow.

Sewer Backup Prevention

Sewer backups are preventable if you remember a few things to keep out of the lines. Don't flush wipes, diapers, grease, butter, feminine hygiene products, rags, medication or plastics.

You should have your lateral sewer lines checked regularly by a plumber or sewer cleaner for blockage and root damage, especially if you have trees.



When is the City responsible?

According to State of Michigan Public Act 222, all claims for damages related to sewer backups filed against a municipality must demonstrate the following:

- The sanitary sewer main had a defect
- The city knew – or as part of reasonable diligence – should have known about the defect
- The city failed to take reasonable steps in a reasonable amount of time to repair, correct or remedy the defect
- The defect resulted in a backup or injury

Claims for damages must be filed in writing within 45 days of the event.

You'll also need to contact your insurance carrier to see if your issue meets all of the required criteria to be covered for the loss. If so, your insurance company will need to provide a letter to the City about detailing your insurance coverage.

The City will ask for a copy of the letter from your insurance carrier about your coverage. Claims for damages must be filed in writing within 45 days of the event.

Next steps

Call 311 - This is a great first step for most issues that may require City assistance. You can expect a maintenance crew to respond within 2-4 hours. If a crew has not responded after 24 hours, please call 311 to report this.

File Claim if needed -

grandrapidsmi.gov/Services/File-a-Claim-with-the-City or visit 300 Monroe Ave. NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Don't flush



Environmental Services Department

grandrapidsmi.gov/
311 or 616-456-3000



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