

REQUEST FOR COUNCIL ACTION

Date: 3/19/12
Item No.: 13.c

Department Approval



City Manager Approval



Item Description: Discuss Assistance and Education Options Regarding Sanitary Sewer Backups

BACKGROUND

The City Council occasionally receives requests for assistance from private property owners related to sanitary sewer backups. On March 12, 2012, the City Council will be hearing a presentation from League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust staff on their insurance programs and how claims are handled. Staff will present various education efforts we are implementing on how to prevent sewer backups and what to do if a backup occurs. We will also discuss what some other cities do in this area as assistance to property owners. They include self insurance for clean up assistance and cost share assistance to upgrade the private sewer lateral. Some highlights of the discussion are as follows:

Fridley sewer backup cleanup assistance program

- City retained contractor immediately begins cleanup once backup is identified in city mainline

- City admits no fault or responsibility for damage

- Costs average \$2-3000 per incident

- Maximum city will cover is \$5000

- Damage claims are routed to LMCIT for claims adjusting

Televising of private sewer laterals

Cost share of private lateral rehabilitation or replacement

Cost share of backflow prevention devices

Enhanced education of property owners regarding service lateral insurance coverage, backflow prevention, and inflow and infiltration.

Attached is an example of the educational information staff has developed to better educate residents on what to do if a backup occurs and how to prevent sewer backups.

POLICY OBJECTIVE

The City has a sanitary sewer maintenance program and a capital improvement program to ensure the sanitary sewer system is operating with minimum risk of damage to private property.

FINANCIAL IMPACTS

Staff is working on an estimated cost for assistance programs for the discussion at the meeting.

The city currently averages 6-8 sanitary sewer backup claims per year.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff is seeking Council feedback and direction on the assistance programs discussed.

31 **REQUESTED COUNCIL ACTION**

32 Discuss possible options for assistance to private property owners after a sanitary sewer backup.

Prepared by: Duane Schwartz, Public Works Director
Attachments: A: Brochure



Sewer Backups

What You Should Know and How You Should Protect Yourself

Occasionally a blockage in a sewer line will result in a backup of sanitary sewage into a private home. If you experience a backup, immediately contact the City of Roseville Public Works Department. The following information will answer the basic questions about what to do if you experience a backup and how to begin cleaning.

INSURANCE

According to the Insurance Information Institute, most sewer backups are not covered under a typical homeowner's insurance policy, nor are they covered by flood insurance. For homes that have been severely damaged by sewer backups and are uninhabitable, your basic homeowner's policy may include *Loss of Use* coverage, which provides reimbursement for lodging, food and other living expenses you may incur if you have to vacate your home. For most

consumers, coverage for sewer-related problems must be purchased either as a separate product or as a rider on the homeowner's policy. Fortunately, sewer backup coverage is available from most insurance companies for a nominal cost; a small price to pay for significant piece of mind and protection.

CLEAN UP

For large clean ups, we suggest you call a cleaning service. Your insurance carrier might have suggestions on which service to use or you can look in the Yellow Pages. For smaller backups you can clean yourself, use a solution of two tablespoons chlorine bleach in one gallon of water. Thoroughly clean the areas affected by the backup as soon as possible. The Minnesota Department of Health suggests:

- Use outside air & an exhaust fan to remove moist air from the house.
- If your basement is flooded, pump the water in stages – about one-third per day. Make sure the level of floodwater outside is below the level of the basement floor. If not, do not pump the basement all at once because the saturated soil could cause the basement walls to collapse.
- Wear a mask & consult your physician if you have questions.
- Open, clean, decontaminate, and thoroughly dry cavities in walls, floors, and ceilings.
- Allow walls to dry from the inside out.
- Remove moisture and debris from all surfaces.
- Remove & toss all interior wall finishing materials and insulation.

- If you think you might have materials containing asbestos in your home, call the Minnesota Department of Health at 651-201-4620.
- If any materials are still wet or moist after 24-48 hours, you should assume they have mold growing on them.

Do not mix chlorine bleach with ammonia.
This combination produces poisonous gas!

FOOD

- Throw out any opened food or packaged foods that are not waterproof. Commercially canned foods can be salvaged if the labels are removed and the cans thoroughly washed. The cans should be disinfected by wiping the entire surface with a laundry bleach and water mixture and rinsed in clear water.

CLOTHING & HOUSEHOLD

- Line-dry all articles before attempting to clean or treat them.
- After drying, brush off loose dirt and debris.
- Wash clothes several times in cold water. Add up to a cup of bleach per load of wash.
- Throw out mattresses and pillows.

FLOORS & FURNITURE

- Pull up waterlogged carpet & pads immediately to prevent further floor damage. Throw away the pads.
- Clean and dry your floors thoroughly.

WET HARDWOOD FLOORS & APPLIANCES

- Scrub floors and woodwork within 48 hours using a stiff brush, water, detergent, and disinfectant.

- Discard contaminated upholstered furniture.
- Clean, rinse and disinfect wood furniture.
- If the furnace was flooded, have it inspected and serviced by a professional furnace service before using.

RECORD KEEPING

- Take pictures of damage for your records & write description.
- Keep receipts for all work done.
- Record date and time of occurrence and note which sewer areas surcharged—floor drain, lower level toilet, laundry tub and the like.

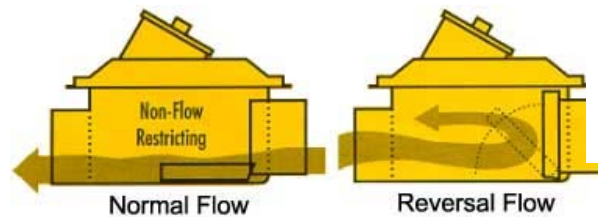
Inflow & Infiltration (I&I)

Inflow and infiltration of water can use up sewer capacity during significant storm events. During periods of heavy rainfalls, the sewer lines become inundated with large amounts of groundwater and storm water. The sewer lines are incapable of handling the overwhelming flow. Because of this potential for I & I (clear water getting into sanitary sewer systems), City ordinance prohibits property owners from disposing of clear water into the sanitary sewer system. This includes water from any roof, surface or ground sump pump, foundation drain, or swimming pool.

BACKUP PREVENTION

As a resident, you can play a key role in preventing sanitary sewer backups. To help prevent backups, please dispose of the following items properly, NOT by dumping in a drain or flushing down the toilet:

- DISPOSABLE WIPES
- Diapers
- Paper towels
- Sanitary Napkins
- Garage waste, such as oil & grease
- Ashes, corrosives, glass, metals, paint
- Yard waste, such as sand, soil, or mud



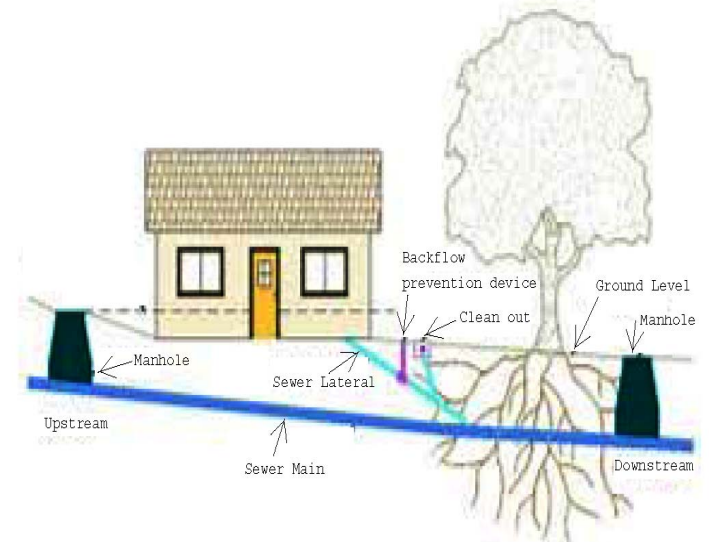
PREVENTION DEVICES

The objective of a backflow prevention device is to prevent contamination from water flowing backwards in a distribution system. There are several types of backflow prevention devices. Some can be installed in the drain, others in the pipe.

How does it work?

A backflow valve can be installed in the basement at the exit point from the home or building, or in the sewer lateral outside of the building.

The "lateral" is the underground pipe that carries sewage from private property to the city's sewer main. The backflow valve is installed downstream and prevents sewage from backing up into the lateral beyond ("above") this valve. Typically, sanitary sewer service is a gravity based system and any blockage can result in a backflow from upstream.



Cost

Prices vary depending on the plumbing setup. The backflow devices themselves may cost a few hundred dollars, but we suggest you consult your local plumber for further information regarding cost, including installation cost. It is always a good idea to get 2 to 3 estimates to ensure a fair price.

For more information, contact the City of Roseville Public Works Department at 651-792-7004. For cleanup info, visit the MN Department of Health's website at www.health.state.mn.us.



City of Roseville
Public Works Department
651-792-7004
www.cityofroseville.com