



Sewage Backup

Backed up sewer lines can cause thousands of dollars in damage to floors, electrical systems, furniture and other personal belongings, and walls. It is important to remember that according to the IICRC, sewage is a category 3 water. Category 3 is the most severe type of water loss as it contains grossly contaminated water and it is required that all affected porous materials be cut out/disposed of. Most people do not realize that as property owners, they are responsible for the maintenance and repair of their sewer lateral line, the pipeline between the city sanitary sewer main (which is usually located in the street) and the building. The sewer lateral is owned and maintained by the property owner and their responsibility includes any part of the lateral that extends into the street or public right of way. A cracked or deteriorated lateral or one filled with tree roots can allow groundwater to seep into the system, and cause problems.

Below are some of the most common causes of sewer backups according to the Civil Engineering Research Foundation.

Aging sewer systems – the American Society of Civil Engineers indicates that the nation's 600,000 plus miles of sewer lines are an average of 30 years old. The increase in the number of properties connected to an already aging sewage system has also contributed to rapid increases in sanitary sewer backups, flooded basements and overflows.

Tree Roots – seeking moisture, small roots of trees and shrubs make their way into sewer line cracks and service pipe joints, and can cause extensive damage or blockages as they grow larger. The cost of the clean-up will fall to the problem tree's owner. If the issue is a result of a combination of city and private trees, the costs are sometimes split between the city and the property owner.

Combined pipelines – problems arise in systems that combine storm water and raw sewage into the same pipeline. During heavy rain storms, the systems are exposed to more volume than they can handle, and the result is a sewage backup situation that allows sewage to spew out into low lying areas and basements.

Sanitary main blockages – a blockage can occur in a city sanitary main. If the blockage is not detected in time, sewage from the main can back up into properties through floor drains. If this does happen, it is usually slowly and there are early indications of the problem. Make sure and call a licensed plumber to assess the situation and if sewage is entering at a rapid rate make sure and call the city public works office.

As a property owner there is several things that can be done to try and prevent sewage backups in your sewer lateral and in the city main.

Dispose of grease properly – cooking oil should be poured into a heat resistant container and disposed of properly once it cools off. Washing grease down the drain can cause it to solidify either in the drain, the lateral line, or in the city's main sewer causing the line to constrict and eventually clog.

Periodically cut tree roots – tree roots might have to be cut by a professional if the owner is continuing to have problems with tree roots entering the lateral line.

Dispose of paper products properly – paper towels, disposable (and cloth) diapers, hygienic wipes and feminine products do not deteriorate quickly and could cause a great deal of trouble in the property owner's lateral as well as in the city main.

Install a back water prevention valve – a properly installed and maintained backwater valve allows sewage to go out, and not come back in. This fixture is installed into a sewer line (sometimes a drain line) and the work needs to be performed by a licensed plumber. Sewage backups can lead to disease and damage to your property and valuables. Prompt clean-up of the affected property can help minimize the inconvenience and help prevent further damage. Make sure and call an IICRC accredited restoration company to clean up the damage and effectively dry the structure. Until next time my friends, be prepared and stay safe.

August 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 IFMA Luncheon	2	3	4
5	6	7	8 AAFAME Luncheon	9	10 CE Class	11
12	13	14 SACA Luncheon	15 IIASA Luncheon SABOMA Luncheon	16 Austin BOMA Luncheon SAABE Luncheon	17	18
19	20	21	22	23 IWSA Luncheon	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

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Events

August 1: IFMA Luncheon
 August 8: AAFAME Luncheon
 August 10: CE Class
 August 14: SACA Luncheon
 August 15: IIASA Luncheon
 August 15: SA BOMA Luncheon
 August 16: Austin BOMA Luncheon
 August 16: SAABE Luncheon
 August 23: IWSA Luncheon

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