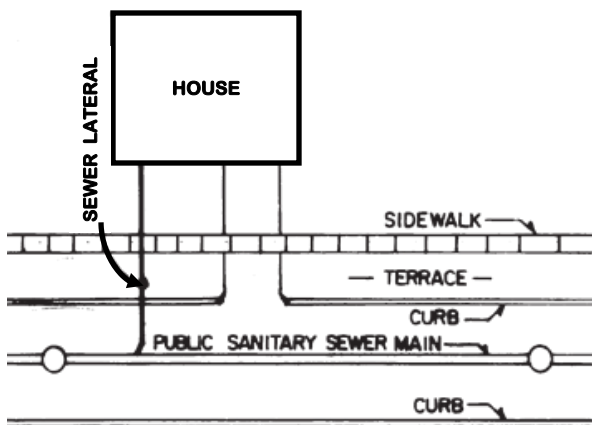


SEWER MAINTENANCE

CITY ENGINEERING DIVISION
1600 EMIL STREET
MADISON, WI 53713

If your sewer backs up:

1. Stop running water including any appliances and report it immediately. Call the City Engineering Division's Sewer Operations Section at (608) 266-4430. City Engineering Staff members are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to check the public sanitary sewer main that services your home or business, but outside of regular business hours your call will be answered by the Water Utility 24-hour dispatcher.
2. The City Engineering Division's Sewer Operations crews will first check the public sewer main (pipe). If the public main is operating normally, your private sewer lateral is likely the cause of the sewer backup. The emergency crew will immediately attempt to notify the property owner or the resident. (The private sewer lateral extends from the interior plumbing of the building to where the pipe connects to the public sewer main, usually located at the center of the street)
3. If a blockage in the private sewer lateral is the cause of the sewer backup, it is the responsibility of the property owner to clear the blockage. You can hire "sewer cleaners" who are equipped to remove such blockages from your private sewer lateral. The City requires such private contractors to be licensed and prequalified to work in the Public Right-of-Way. A list of pre-approved contractors is on the city website at <http://www.cityofmadison.com/engineering/developers-contractors/contractors/prequalified-contractors-list>. Licensing and pre-approval is not needed for property owners who do the work themselves.
4. If you or your contractor are unable to fix the blockage from the private sewer lateral, it is possible that the pipe has collapsed. Please contact the City Engineering Division's Sewer Operations Section to determine the next steps to re-establish your sewer service. If any part of the private sewer lateral within the Right-of-Way or on private property needs to be repaired, the owner is responsible for the repair and/or replacement. If a contractor is used, they must be prequalified by the city. City Engineering recommends that property owners ask their contractors to televise the sewer lateral and provide a video before agreeing to have the lateral repaired. City Engineering personnel is available to review the video free of charge.



Para la interpretación en Español de este folleto,
favor de comunicarse al (608) 266-4430.

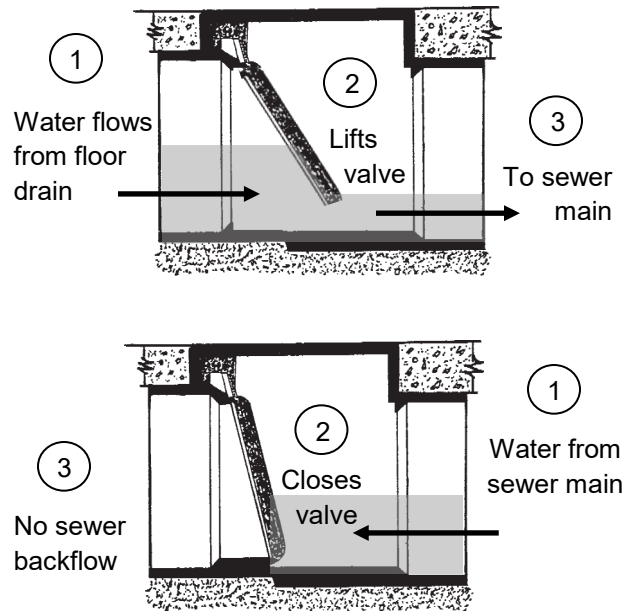
How to prevent sewer back-up:

Many homes have a backwater valve included as part of the floor drain. This valve is intended to prevent the backup of sewage from the sewer into the building through the floor drain. Typical valves are either a flap or ball design (see images below).

Both a flap or ball design can become stuck open because of a buildup of lint, corrosion, or other debris unless it is inspected and maintained at least twice a year. To locate the backwater valve, first remove the access cover or the floor drain grating and unscrew the cap. If you have additional questions you may call the City Engineering Division's Sewer Operations Section at (608) 266-4430.

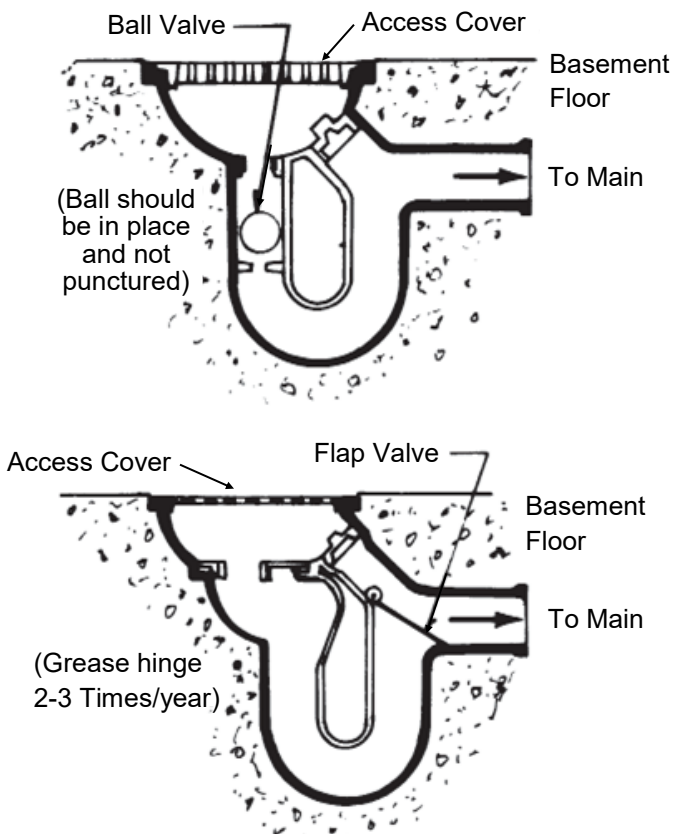
If your home does not have a backwater valve, in most cases one can be installed between your floor drain and your sewer cleanout or alternatively in your yard. Single and two family homes with a history of backups may qualify for a rebate to cover a portion of the backwater valve cost. Visit our website for more information: www.cityofmadison.com/engineering/sanitary-sewer/programs-initiatives/backwater-valve-program.

Backwater Valve in Action



NOTE: There are other state plumbing code approved backwater valves not shown.

Typical Floor Drains With Backwater Valves



Do not plant trees and/or shrubs over the private sewer. The roots of trees, particularly Silver Maple and Willow trees, will seek out the joints of the sewer pipe and eventually clog it.

Do not put large amounts of vegetable waste, such as pea pods and tomato skins, through the garbage disposal at one time. Even though these materials will go through the garbage disposal, they clog the private sewer. This also applies to large amounts of grease and paint which will build up in the sewer pipe over a period of time eventually causing a blockage. Keep lint traps in place in the sinks where washing machines drain. It is easier to clean out the lint traps than it is to clean out the building sewer.

If the private sewer serves a commercial establishment in which a grease trap is required, the grease trap should be cleaned periodically to prevent the solids from escaping into the private sewer.

Being required to unclog or clean sediment from your private sewer every 1-3 years is not unusual. But if a homeowner has to have the private sewer cleaned more often than annually, they should consider contacting the City Engineering Division to determine if the public sewer or private sewer is causing the problem.