

DOWNERS GROVE SANITARY DISTRICT

SANITARY SEWER BACKUPS AND SEWER RODDING

Sanitary Sewer Backups

Sanitary sewer backups may occur at any time. The backup may be due to blockages in the building sanitary service or the public sanitary sewer, or high flow conditions in the public sewer. When you experience a sanitary sewer backup or when you feel the problem may be caused outside of your home or building, you should call the Sanitary District office at 969-0664. The District may be able to assist in solving the problem and prevent any expense on your part. The Sanitary District responds to emergencies 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. (Please call during normal business hours if it is not an emergency.) A Sanitary District representative will be dispatched to investigate the backup to determine the cause and to check the public sanitary sewer at no cost to you. The representative will advise you and measure the approximate distance from your home or building to the public sanitary sewer. This information will be useful to you if you need to call a contractor to rod your building service.

During severe rainstorms, personnel may not be able to visit each home, but will check the public sanitary sewer in the area to verify its condition and take corrective action if possible. Reporting of all sanitary sewer backups is essential to providing the information necessary for monitoring of sewer system conditions, identification of problem areas, and determination of causes and possible remedies.

A Sanitary Sewer Backup Handbook is available which provides additional information on the types and causes of sewer backups. Please call the District office at 630-969-0664 if you would like to receive a copy of this Handbook.

Sewer Rodding

If the problem is determined to be in your building sanitary service, you will need to have the sewer rodded. The most common cause of blockages in sewer pipes is roots. Roots grow through joints or cracks in clay pipe in search of water and nutrients. The presence of roots in a sewer doesn't mean the pipe is broken or is going to fall apart, just that the sewer needs to be rodded to remove as many of the roots as possible. Mechanical rodding is typically the first step in opening a blocked sewer. Rodding is performed by accessing the pipe through a cleanout, or by removing a toilet, and inserting a steel rod with various tools on the end of it. This service typically costs between \$50 and \$300 and can be more expensive for after-hours and emergency service.

If your building sanitary service is rodded, you will need to complete a report to document the work performed. You are responsible for submitting this report and a copy of a

paid receipt from your contractor to the Sanitary District. This report form will be provided to you by the Sanitary District representative.

There are several choices of contractors for sewer rodding. It's a good idea to get price quotes from more than one contractor so that rates can be compared. Ask the contractor if his work is *guaranteed and for how long*. Let the contractor know if you have any large trees over your building sanitary service line and any history of sanitary sewer backups. If you have a long building sanitary service line (100' or more) you need to ask the contractor if his equipment will adequately rod the distance of the building sanitary service line (especially if tree roots may be involved). The contractor must rod from the *house all the way to the public sanitary sewer* to effectively clean the service line (or another visit and additional expense is likely). It is recommended that the contractor use as large a cutter as the cleanout and piping will allow.

If your house is more than 20 years old, then additional steps may be necessary to clear the blockage. The sewer pipe leaving the home is usually four inches in diameter and changes to a six-inch clay pipe in your yard. Rodding from inside the home or building may not work in this situation because the tools used to clean the pipe are not big enough to effectively remove roots or blockages in the larger clay pipe. This may require the installation of a cleanout outside the house which will allow the insertion of a larger tool. If the service line still cannot be opened, replacement of the clay pipe may be necessary. This is a large project that requires excavation and replacement of the entire existing pipe and is required in only a small number of cases.

If you have had recurring problems with your building sanitary service, the Sanitary District will perform a television inspection of this service pipe to determine the cause of the problem. This television inspection will be performed at no cost to you during our regular business hours. If a television inspection is necessary, a Sanitary District representative will call you upon receipt of your completed rodding report to schedule a time for this inspection.

Building Sanitary Service Repair Assistance Program

If a repair to your building sanitary service is necessary, such as the installation of an outside cleanout or other repair which requires excavation, the work may be eligible under the Building Sanitary Service Repair Assistance Program. The District implemented the Building Sanitary Service Repair Assistance Program effective July 1, 2002. Under this program, the District will repair, rehabilitate or replace a building sanitary service under certain conditions. The program covers the entire building sanitary service from the building to the public sewer. Generally, the program will assist property owners who have experienced a minimum of three building sanitary service backup incidents in a two-year period, provided the District is notified and allowed to investigate the sewer backups. The District will determine if the cause of the repeated maintenance activity is a problem eligible for participation and, if so, the appropriate corrective measures. All eligible work under this program will be completed by a contractor hired by the Sanitary District, not by your plumber or rodding contractor. It is important to note that this program is not a substitute for and does not cover routine maintenance of the building sanitary service such as rodding.

If you decide not to participate in the Building Sanitary Service Repair Assistance Program and proceed to hire your own contractor to perform a sanitary sewer repair, you must apply for a permit from the Downers Grove Sanitary District. The contractor must be bonded with the District. All construction must be inspected by the District to insure compliance with District construction specifications. No work may be started until a permit is issued. **This work is not eligible for reimbursement by the District.**

Backups due to High Flow Conditions

If your backup is caused by high flow conditions in the sanitary sewer system during wet weather periods, you may wish to consider an improvement to your home or building to prevent sewer backups. A cost-sharing program is available for residents who have experienced sewer backup problems and desire to convert to an overhead sewer system or install backflow prevention devices. Information regarding the program is available from the District office.

Public Sanitary Sewer Blockages

If District personnel determine that the sanitary sewer backup was caused by a blockage of the public sanitary sewer, you may be eligible for reimbursement of some costs associated with the backup. Information regarding reimbursement will be provided to you by the Sanitary District representative. Please note that sanitary sewer backups occurring as a result of high flow conditions in the public sanitary sewer are not eligible for reimbursement under this program. Blockages or problems of any nature in the building sanitary service are the responsibility of the homeowner and are not eligible for reimbursement under this program, however, if repairs to the building sanitary service are necessary, the repair work may be eligible under the Building Sanitary Service Repair Assistance Program mentioned earlier.