

# Sanitary Back Up

Sanitary backups may occur where the water enters your home through the sanitary sewer floor drains, sinks or toilets, and are mainly caused by blockages or pipe capacity. If you suspect a problem with your sanitary sewer pipe, contact a plumber or the Ontario Clean Water Agency (OCWA) at 1-866-775-7712 during regular business hours, or 705-526-5762 afterhours, to help diagnose sewer problems.

## A blockage in the homeowners pipe

A common cause of sewer backups is a blockage in the pipe that runs between your home and the Township's main sanitary sewer pipe. Blockages in sewers can be caused by soil settlement, misaligned joints, root infiltration or pipe collapses. Sewer blockages can also be caused by items such as cooking grease, rags, or pieces of solid debris that have been flushed down a household drain or toilet.

The sewer pipe that runs from your home to the property line is owned and maintained by the homeowner.

## A blockage in the Township's pipe

Sewer backups may also be caused when there is a blockage in the Township's main sanitary sewer pipe. Tay Township and OCWA maintain the sanitary system by regularly flushing water through it and running a TV camera in to check the condition of the pipe. The Township and OCWA also schedules and performs maintenance when appropriate.

## Sanitary Backwater Valve

Installing a sanitary backwater valve will decrease the chance of flooding in your home. Discussion with a licensed plumber and educating yourself in advance is important.

## Insurance Claim

In the unfortunate event that you have a sanitary back up, immediately contact your insurance company or representative. Provided you have coverage, your Insurance Company can recommend the services of a qualified contractor experienced in mitigating and restoring the damage sustained.

If you do not have insurance coverage, consider safety and consider contacting an experienced restoration contractor to ensure the damage is properly restored.

If you or your insurance company is of the opinion that the Township or OCWA should provide compensation for the damages, a written request must be submitted to OCWA within 10 days of the incident.

Unlike a claim under one's home insurance policy, a claim against a municipal utility is usually founded upon an allegation of negligence. In order for municipal utility to compensate homeowners for damage resulting from the escape of water from a sanitary or

storm sewer system, the municipal utility must have done or failed to have done something that caused the backup.

During this process, it is the responsibility of the homeowner to take all reasonable steps to reduce the amount of damage.

## Clean up

If your basement has flooded, it's important to take the proper care and maintenance when cleaning.

1. Be aware of electrical hazards when you enter the affected area. Water conducts electricity.
2. Be aware of health hazards when you enter the affected area. Water can carry bacteria that may affect health. Proper safety clothing should be used.
3. It is important that:
  - The water is extracted/drained,
  - Building finishes and contents that have either been submerged or have absorbed water be inspected/removed and assessed for restoration or disposal. (It is advisable that an accredited restoration contractor be consulted)
  - Drying of the exposed structure takes place.

Mould can begin to grow within 48 hours of water exposure may cause adverse health conditions. Properly drying areas and objects that have water damage will help reduce further mould growth and damage to the premises.

1. Photos of the affected area should be obtained and preserved, prior to the removal of the items/finishes.

## Don't Flush Trouble - Items of concern that cause Sanitary Backups...

- Food Fat
- Wipes
- Medicines
- Personal Hygiene Products
- Cat Litter
- Cigarette Butts
- Paint/Oil