

Sewer Backups

What if my sewer backs up?

Sewer backups are usually unexpected and always create a mess. At best the backup requires unpleasant cleanup and sometimes expensive damage. When this happens, our customers have questions.

Who is going to fix the problem?

That depends on whether the stoppage is in your private line or the City main. If it is in the City main, we fix it as quickly as possible and keep you informed about what's being done. If the problem is with the private line connecting your house to the City main, we'll tell you so you can get it fixed.

Who is going to pay for this?

You have to pay the bill. This is why it is important to make sure your homeowner's insurance covers sewer backups.

Can CRMU do anything to help me?

Possibly. CRMU and other City crews may help with the immediate cleanup to address public health issues.

Will CRMU reimburse me for the damage if the backup is in the City main?

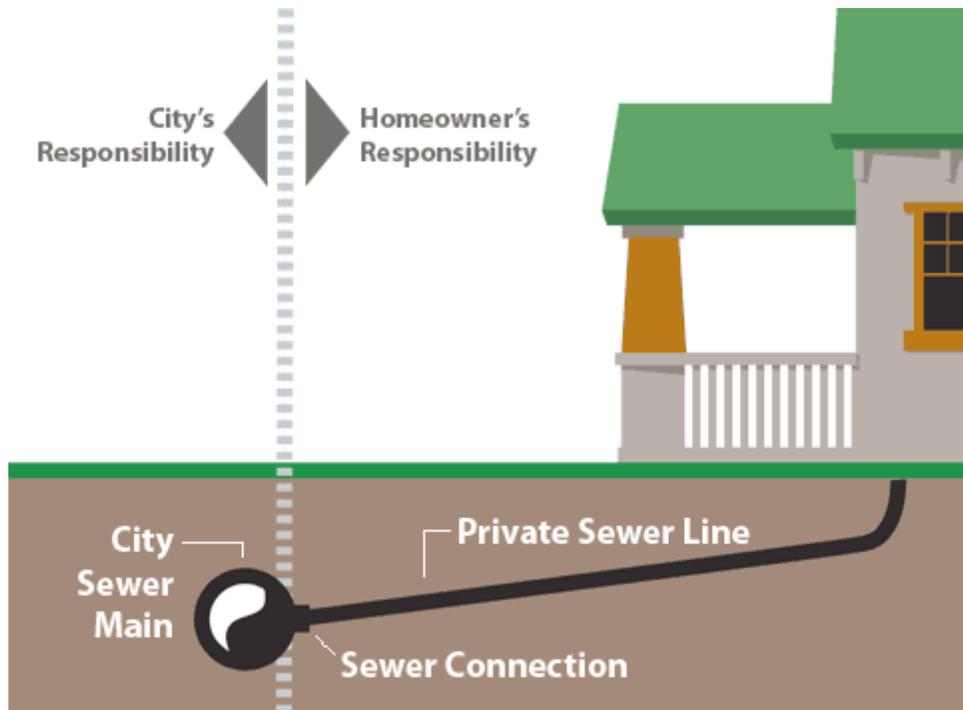
Only if we had advance knowledge that the City system was at fault and we didn't fix the problem.

Is this City policy or law?

This is law. CRMU is only responsible for its own property – not your line or connection to the main. CRMU can only be held liable for damages if we knew we had a problem and didn't fix it in a reasonable time.

How do I find out if I can be reimbursed?

If the stoppage is not on your private line, you can file a claim. The legal staff will investigate to see if CRMU is liable which includes prior notice of the system's problem.



Homeowner responsibility for a sewer line extends past the property line and all the way to where the sewer ties into the City main.

Install a backflow valve to prevent backups



The best protection against sewer backups is to have a plumber add a backflow valve to your line.

A backflow valve can stop sewage from backing up into your home. The valve closes when water comes into it from the wrong direction. If a clog occurs, the backflow valve will stop the sewage from backing up into your house. Talk to your plumber about the installation and cleaning.

Make sure you have proper insurance

Sewer backups are not automatically covered by all homeowner's insurance policies. Check your policy to make sure you are covered for damages due to sewer backups. Remember, CRMU is not an insurer. CRMU can only pay for damages under extremely limited circumstances set out by law. Don't assume you're covered! You may need a special option for coverage. Talk to your insurance agent.

Avoid Future Backups

Dispose of grease and fats with your trash, not down the drain

Even if you run it through a garbage disposal, grease in drains can collect and harden into a plug.

Plant trees and large shrubs away from sewer lines

Roots grow toward breaks or cracks in lines. When roots get inside the pipe, they clog it.

Never connect sump pumps, French drains or other flood control systems to your sanitary sewer

It's illegal and the debris and silt will clog your line. Call a plumber to undo illegal connections.