

What can cause wastewater to back up or overflow?

The leading cause of wastewater backups is grease poured down kitchen drains, which blocks the pipe. Obstacles like tree roots growing into the pipe or garbage dropped into a manhole can also cause an overflow.

Does the City assist with cleanup and repair?

It depends.
The City cannot prevent people from improperly using the sewer system. The City does provide some “no-fault” financial assistance for the cost of cleanup and repair if:

- The backup originated in the City sewer system (not in private plumbing)
- The property damage* was directly caused by sewage
- The billed sewer customer has an active sewer account in good standing
- The customer did not contribute to the backup or property loss by improper use of the private plumbing system
- The damages are not covered by private property insurance
- The property owner signs an agreement to install a backup-prevention device designed to help prevent future backups**

**No other types of loss, including personal injury, illness, emotional distress, loss of income, temporary lodging, etc., are covered.*

***The City will cover the installation expense; the property owner must own and maintain the device.*

What is the next step?

If the above applies, an adjuster will:

- Photograph and appraise the property damage
- Discuss the City's program for cleanup and repair
- Help identify potential cleanup contractors for you to choose
- Leave a phone number where the adjuster - who will be your point of contact from this point forward - can be reached during business hours

Q and A

Fact: Grease poured down drains and debris dumped into manholes contributes to blockages that can cause wastewater backups in homes and businesses.

Fact: Each year Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities spends millions of dollars to keep over 3,000 - miles of wastewater pipe in good working order.

What are my responsibilities?

The billed sewer customer is then responsible for:

- Obtaining contracts to clean the backup site and repair any damage
- Providing the adjuster the names of the contractors conducting cleanup and repair

Note: Soiled and/or damaged items should not be removed until examined by the adjuster. Once that has occurred, you may have these items hauled away. We suggest you include any hauling as part of your repair contract.

Who can I call if I have questions about financial assistance?

Contact your adjuster or the City of Charlotte's Risk Management Division at **704.336.3301**.

What are the steps involved in getting a backup-prevention device installed?

The City will pay a licensed plumber to install a backup-prevention device in your service pipe to help minimize the chance of a future backup from the City sewer system. The City does not own or maintain the backup-prevention device after installation.

Could another backup occur?

Yes.
Wastewater generated by the customer could back up within the property's plumbing:

- When the street sewer pipe is at or near capacity and the backup-prevention device is closed
- Grease or other obstacles in the plumbing causes a blockage
- The backup-prevention device is not properly maintained by the customer



What to do if a backup occurs.

If you see wastewater overflowing out of a manhole or a drain, please call Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities immediately at **311**. This number is answered 24 hours a day, year-round.

A repair crew will respond quickly, investigate the cause of the backup and repair any publicly owned wastewater pipe, if needed. (In some cases the crew may repair pipe under your property.) The repair crew also may call a City adjuster, who would serve as your point of contact following the initial call and response.

When grease goes down the drain, sewage backs up.

Each year Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities spends millions of dollars to keep over 3,000 miles of wastewater pipe in good working order. Despite this preventative maintenance, sometimes wastewater (sewage) can back up into a residence or business.



A guide to help customers
if a backup occurs

and
Up

When Wastewater
Backs Up

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www.cmutilities.com

Thank you for helping to protect our environment.

If you experience a wastewater backup or see an overflow,
please call 311 immediately.

