

## “What do I do once a backup is evident?”

1. Carefully close as many drain openings as you can.
2. Don't run any water down any drain in your home until the stoppage is cleared.
3. Check with your neighbors; if they have the same issue it could indicate the problem is in the main line.
4. Call a plumber to assist with closing your drains, assessing and clearing the blockage.
5. Call your utility to report the issue. They'll recommend action and check the main line for issues.\*
6. Call your homeowners' insurance agent to determine what your policy covers.

\*Public Works employs 24/7 on-call operators who deal with water and wastewater collections issues. Call 970-726-7845; leave your number and they will call you back as soon as possible.



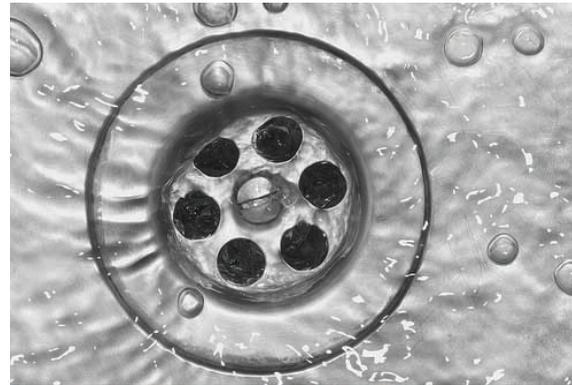
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for sewer back-ups

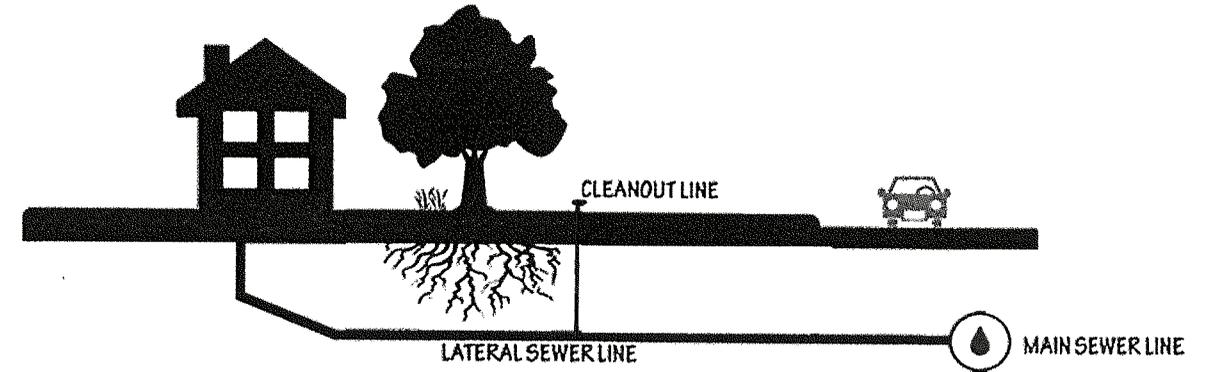
## TOWN OF FRASER Sewer Line Backups

Information and resources for homeowners in the Town of Fraser



### What is a sewer backup and who cleans up the mess?

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A backup occurs when raw sewage and wastewater enter your home through your toilet, tub, sink or any drain in your home. They're common in older homes, basements, and on lower floors.

In most cases, the homeowner cleans up the mess. If the backup occurs in your service line or in the main line as a result of anything other than the utility's negligence, it is your responsibility. Some basic homeowner insurance policies do not cover this type of incident.

These events are a common problem throughout the United States. They are disgusting, time-consuming, costly and can happen without warning.

Fortunately, there are resources and affordable insurance options that can help you prevent, prepare, cope and recover from sewer backups.

### How can you prevent sewer backups?

- A plumber can assess your risk and install a back-flow valve or sump pump to help safeguard your basement.
- You can use grease-fighting liquid dish detergents such as Dawn to break up grease blockages.
- Most effectively, never flush or wash anything but human waste, pet waste and toilet paper down a drain. (see expanded list of “What not to Flush” on next page).

### What does the utility do about this problem?

Using industry Best Practices, they maintain sewer systems to lessen the chance of stoppages and backups. This may include video or physical inspections and cleaning or degreasing. Even with this, some backups are unavoidable, especially if caused by vandalism.

# WHAT NOT TO FLUSH -THE LONG LIST

## Diapers/Hygiene Products -

These are designed to be absorbent and don't dissolve quickly.

**Fat, Oil and Grease** - Kitchen or auto grease, oil and fat accumulate in pipes and form clogs.

**Facial Tissue/Paper Towels** - Unlike toilet paper, these aren't designed to dissolve in water over time.

**Wet Wipes** - These don't dissolve quickly and can cause clogs even if the package says "sewer safe."

**Toys or Other Foreign Objects** - These are a common problem in households with children.

Air Fresheners  
Automobile Fluids  
Automobile Parts  
Bacon Grease  
Balloons  
Bandages  
Barbecue Sauce  
Batteries  
Body parts (call 911 for disposal)  
Bones  
Books  
Bras  
Bread Dough  
Building Supplies  
Butter  
Cake Frosting

Candles  
Cat Litter  
Cell Phones  
Cement  
Cheese  
Cigarettes and Butts  
Cleaning Supplies  
Clothing  
Coffee Filters  
Coffee Grounds  
Compact Disks  
Coals and Ashes  
Cosmetics  
Cotton Balls  
Cotton Swabs  
Condoms  
Cooked Meat Drippings  
Cooking Oil  
Diapers  
Deceased Pets  
Decoys  
Dental Appliances  
Dental Floss  
Egg Shells  
Explosives  
Eyeglasses  
Facial Tissue  
Fat, Oil, Grease  
Fertilizer  
Fireworks  
Food Solids

Fruit  
Fur  
Glue  
Gravy  
Guns  
Hair  
Hairbrushes  
Houseplants  
I.D. Cards  
Insects  
Jewelry  
Keys  
Kitchen Oil  
Lard  
Lawn Mowers  
Light Bulbs  
Mayonnaise  
Metal Objects  
Money  
Oatmeal  
OTC Drugs  
Paint  
Panty Liners  
Paper  
Paper Towels  
Perfume  
Pesticides  
Photographs  
Plastic  
Poison  
Porridge

Powders  
Prescription Drugs  
Putty  
Rags  
Remote Controls  
Rocks  
Rubber Bands  
Salad Dressing  
Sanitary Pads  
Shoes  
Small Appliances  
Solvents  
Sour Cream  
Sponges  
Sporting Goods  
Styrofoam  
Syringes  
Tampons & Applicators  
Teeth  
Tools  
Toothbrushes  
Toothpaste  
Toys  
Upholstery  
Vegetables  
Watches  
Wet Wipes  
Yard Debris and...Goldfish!

## THE LIST NEVER ENDS!

This is an astounding list; however, all the items on it have been recovered from municipal sewer systems and **have caused costly damage and sewer back ups.**

# WHAT TO FLUSH

Human waste  
Pet waste, (but not the bag used for pet waste pick-up)  
Toilet paper

## END OF LIST!

Other common causes of sewer backups:

**Separated Joints** Underground pipes are not seamless. They can become disconnected at the joints.

**Clogged Pipes** Clogs can be made of hair, kitchen grease, or any of the items on the what not to flush list.

**Root Damage** Trees can become an issue years after pipes are installed.

**Cracks in the Pipe** Ground movement, roots, clogs, temperature, and poor installation can cause cracks in pipes.

**Mainline Backups** Even with regular maintenance, backups are unavoidable. Natural disasters, vandalism, and infrastructure breakdown can cause backups.

Contact the Town of Fraser on-call Water and Wastewater Collections operator at 970-726-7845; leave your number and your call will be returned.