

Sewer Backup Procedures & Notes

- 1) If a sewer backup occurs, the customer should:
 - ✓ quickly close all drain openings with stoppers or plugs;
 - ✓ prevent any water from running down drains until the blockage has been cleared; and
 - ✓ if possible, check with neighbours to see if the problem is widespread.
- 2) The customer should then contact the Utility to advise them of the problem.
- 3) The Utility, upon being notified, would contact its qualified plumbing contractor/consultant who would assess the matter and advise the Utility. The consultant may need to examine the Utility's service lines in order to assess whether there is a blockage or problem within the central system. If a problem is detected within the Utility's system, the Utility would be responsible to fix the problem or clear the blockage immediately.
- 4) If it is determined that there is no problem with the Utility's service lines, the customer would be advised to call a plumbing or sewer contractor to check on their home and lateral service line. Maintenance and repair of the lateral line from the owner's building to the property line is the owner's responsibility. The customer could opt to have the Utility's contractor investigate and repair the problem when they are investigating the Utility's service mains—with costs being the customer's responsibility—or the customer can choose to engage an independent contractor to carry out the repairs (see Regulation 4.14).

If it is determined that the customer's service lateral needs to be dug up or replaced, the Utility must be notified. Repair or replacement work done to any service lateral by a customer's independent contractor is subject to the Utility's authorization, inspection and supervision. The service lateral must be inspected by the Utility before it can be tamped and filled in and an inspection fee of \$20.00 is charged to customers where this occurs (see Regulations 4.6 & 6.12).

It is important that the Utility ensure that any work is of good quality because if a poor or improper installation of a customer's service lateral is carried out, the Utility can be held liable for certain damages to property and also for the cost to replace a lateral due to poor workmanship (see Regulation 4.14(ii)).

- 5) The Utility can suspend service to prevent damage to the central sewer system in instances where any customer refuses or delays in remedying an identified problem with services (see Regulation 3.10).
- 6) Instances of repair/replacement work should be documented by the Utility and become part of the record on file.

Additional Information:

Sewer Line Check Valve to Prevent Backup

The Utility is responsible to remind customers once a year to install a sewer line check valve where a building has a plumbing fixture below street level or any fixture that might be affected by a backup on the Utility's main sewerage line. The cost to purchase and install a valve is the owner's responsibility. If, after the issuance of a notice from the Utility, a customer chooses not to install a check valve, the customer will be responsible for any damages sustained (see Regulation 4.15).

Insurance

In the majority of cases, a special rider will need to be added to a homeowner's or renter's insurance policy to cover damages related to sewage backups or water damage. This optional coverage is generally not very expensive, but it must usually be specifically requested before it is added to a policy. It is suggested that homeowners check with their insurance agent about this policy provision. Optional insurance is at the homeowner's discretion. There is no requirement under the Regulations relating to insurance.