

Good Neighbor Policy FAQs

Q: Why do I have to sign a release? What does it say?

A: The release protects WSFC Utilities from repeated claims arising from the same incident. When you sign it, you acknowledge receipt of payment to compensate you for damages to your property, you release the city from any future claims arising from this incident and you agree to install a backwater valve on your sewer service line. The release specifically notes that the terms of the release transfer to future property owners.

Q. What is a backwater valve, and why do I have to install it?

A. A backwater valve acts as a one-way gate on your sewer service line. Sewage can flow out from your house to the sewer main line, but sewage from the sewer main line cannot flow back in. By installing and maintaining a backwater valve, you are protecting your property from future backups.

Q. Why does the city compensate for damages only on the first occurrence at an address?

A. If the city has previously compensated the owner of a property for damages under the Good Neighbor Policy, that owner signed a release agreeing to install a backwater valve to prevent future backups. The city cannot be responsible for owners who did not follow-through on their agreement to install a backwater valve or did not keep their backwater valve maintained.

Q. What if I'm just renting this house?

A. You may file a claim with the city for damages to your personal property. If you have a personal property/renter's policy, you should check with your insurance company to see if you have a rider or endorsement that covers sewer backups. The property owner is responsible for filing a claim for damages to the house.

Q. Why won't the city pay for a blockage in my service line?

A. If a blockage in the sewer main line backs up into your house, you have been damaged by events beyond your control. However, the service line running from your house out to the sewer main line is part of your home plumbing. It is your property and only serves your house. YOU have control over fats, oils, grease, wipes, sanitary products and other items that go down your drains. All of these things create blockages that cause sewer backups. Put them in the trash instead. **Remember No Wipes in Pipes!**

**Only flush
the four Ps!
Pee, Poop, Puke
& (toilet) Paper.**



cityofws.org/canthe grease
cityofws.org/nowipes

For information and sewer emergencies, contact:



Call 311 or 336-727-8000
citylink@cityofws.org

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Good Neighbor Policy

Sewer Backup Assistance for Residents

The fact that you have experienced a sewer backup indicates that your house may require installation of a backwater valve.

Under the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Utilities **Good Neighbor Policy**, you may be eligible to receive compensation for damages caused by a sewer backup in your home if a backwater valve is required and you do not have one.

If you have already had service by a plumber or a courtesy cleanout by WSFC Utilities Field Services and you think you may qualify, the next thing you should do is **contact your homeowners insurance company** to see if you have a rider or endorsement that covers sewer backups. You will need to provide a copy or digital scan of your policy declaration page to confirm the deductible.

Next, call City Link 311 or 336-727-8000.

Reimbursement for damages caused by a sewer backup may be considered **ONLY** if you meet all of these criteria:

1. The backup was caused by a blockage in the sewer main line and not in the connection to your home's service line;
2. This is the first sewer backup at this address;
3. You sign a release waiving any further claims in exchange for payment; and
4. You agree to install a backwater valve in your service line to prevent future problems.

- If it is determined that you are eligible for compensation and your property is insured for the damages to your home, the city may pay any deductible that may apply, up to \$1,000.

- If your property is not insured, the city may reimburse you up to \$15,000 for damage to your home upon being presented with itemized invoices from the person or company performing the restoration.

- The city may also reimburse you for the actual cash value (ACV) of the personal property damaged or destroyed by this backup, up to a maximum of \$5,000. ACV is the current replacement value minus depreciation (age and condition of lost item).

- The city reserves the right to review and adjust all invoices and claims submitted and will reimburse only those costs found to be reasonable and necessary.

DISCLAIMER: The Good Neighbor Policy is not an admission of liability by Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Utilities, which retains and asserts all available defenses regarding a sewer backup in your home.

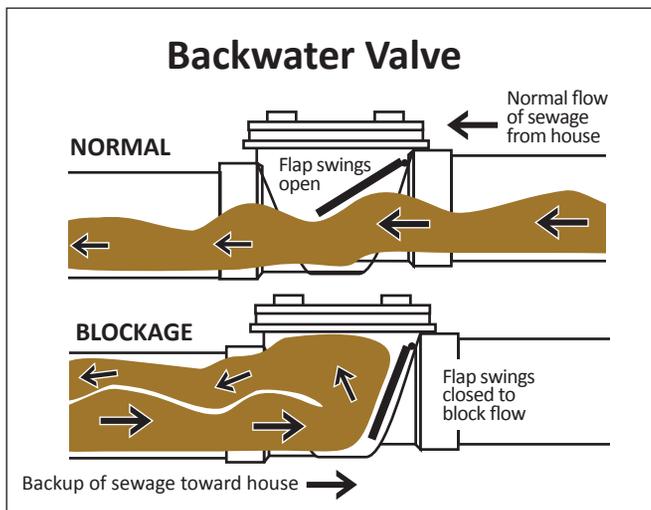


cityofws.org/gnp

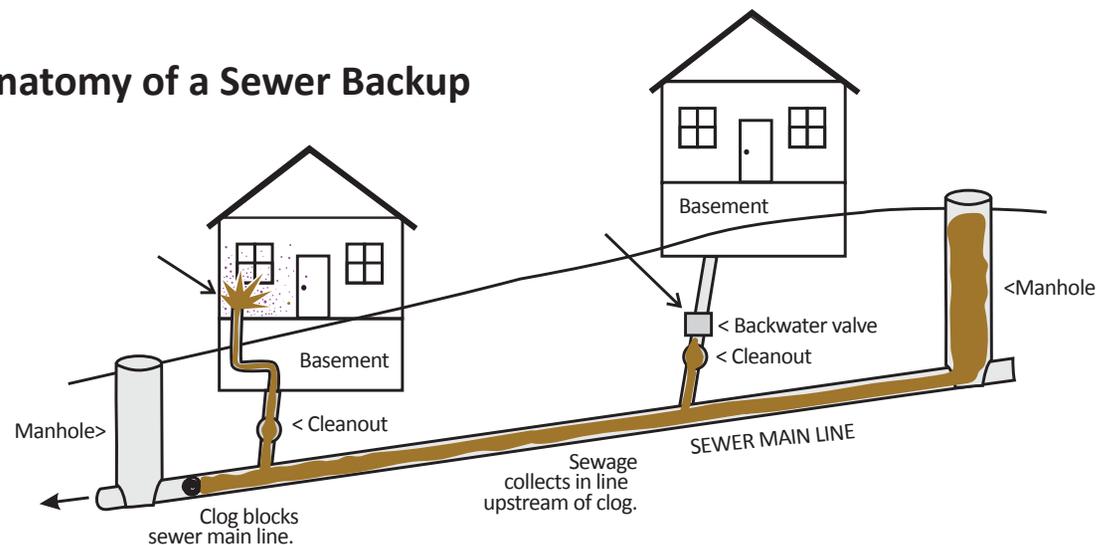


What to do if you experience a sewer backup:

1. **Clean up your property and if needed, hire a contractor who can assist you.**
2. **Call City Link 311 or 336-727-8000.** You may also request service at citylink@cityofws.org, on cityofws.org/citylink or via the CityLink mobile app. Be prepared to provide your name, address and the date of the backup. Your request will be forwarded to the city's Risk Management office.
3. **Be prepared to submit a list of personal property damaged or destroyed by this sewer backup.** The list should include the purchase price (or your best estimate), the age of each item and photographs that show the items. Submit itemized invoices from contractors or businesses that cleaned up and repaired your home. Confirm that your name and address is on every document you submit. Documents may be emailed to risktemp@cityofws.org or mailed to Risk Management, City of Winston-Salem, P.O. Box 2511, Winston-Salem, NC 27101.
4. **Risk Management will open a file on your case, review your claim and make a recommendation to WSFC Utilities.** A claims adjuster may contact you.
5. **Arrange to have a backwater valve installed on your service line.** This device is required by the plumbing code and is designed to protect your property from backups in the future. **THE CITY WILL NOT COMPENSATE YOU FOR DAMAGES IF YOU DO NOT AGREE TO HAVE A BACKWATER VALVE INSTALLED.**
6. **Upon settlement of your claim, a check will be prepared.** Risk Management will contact you to sign a release waiving any further claims. You will receive the check after you sign the release.



Anatomy of a Sewer Backup



Getting your property cleaned

YOU will decide how to clean and repair your home and which items are not salvageable and may need to be thrown away. The city will not offer any advice or expertise in making these decisions.

YOU may hire whoever you want to clean up and repair your home.

Businesses that clean up and repair wastewater damage can be found by searching: water damage restoration. Many are on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

NOTE: The contractor you hire is not employed by the city. YOU will hire the contractor of your choice. YOU will be responsible for all dealings with the contractor and for ensuring that the work is done to your satisfaction. The city makes no representations or endorsements of the quality of their work.

