

Avoiding and Managing Wastewater Sewer Backups

From time to time, the South Adams public sewer system or private sewer lines may experience a blockage causing a backup into a customer's basement. Normally, backups are a result of grease build-up from pouring grease down kitchen drains and/or flushing non-disposable items down toilets (diapers, rags, toys, etc.) that can clog the sewer lines. In time, nothing can flow past the clog and eventually it may backup into private sewer lines and possibly basements.

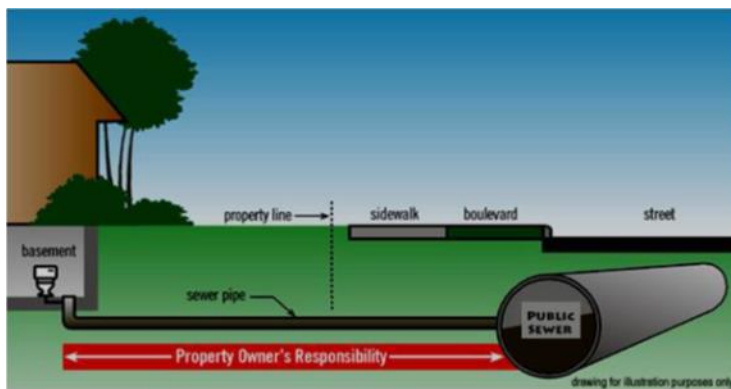
South Adams has a program using jet trucks and cameras to properly maintain sewer mains. However, unidentified blockages do occur within South Adams' 65 sq. mi. service area, through no fault of the District. Likewise, property owners may not be aware that there may be a problem lurking in the lines on their private property that could cause major problems.

Help prevent a wastewater sewer backup by practicing the following guidelines and suggestions:

- Never pour grease down sink drains, garbage disposals or toilets.
- Dispose of heavy paper products in the garbage (e.g., paper towels, diapers etc.).
- Do not throw debris, rocks or dirt down manholes or into storm water drains, and please report any suspicious activity to the police.
- Remove trees/tree roots that are growing near or over your sewer service lines.
- Restaurants and commercial building owners must have grease interceptors that are properly designed, installed, and regularly maintained.
- Any fixtures (toilets, sinks, bathtubs, washing machines subject to backflow of sewage) should be protected by a backwater prevention device or check valve. Backwater devices are especially important in below grade basement fixtures.
- **Your current homeowner's policy most likely does not cover sewer back-up losses.**

To find out, please contact your policy provider and they may offer coverage for this type of occurrence for a nominal additional cost. Make sure that your policy coverage is well defined in writing before signing a contract. Exclusions may be included based on pre-existing conditions, limits on coverage, and limits on your choice of contractors to complete repairs

The sketch below illustrates a large public sewer line that is maintained by South Adams, and a private service line that is the maintenance responsibility of the property owner.



If you have experienced backups in the past in your sewer service line, you may want to look into a routine maintenance program that could prevent any unexpected backup problems.

If you do experience a sewer back-up call the South Adams immediately at 303-288-2646 to help identify where the blockage has occurred. South Adams Water and Sanitation District can provide additional information on how to safely clean-up sewer back-ups if it should occur in your home.