

Sewer Back Up Policy

City of Clovis, NM

1. The City is responsible for maintaining main sewer lines and lateral sewer lines, which are located on City Property.
2. Property owners are responsible for maintaining building sewer lines as well as lateral sewer lines located on private property. Property owners are also responsible for maintaining the “Y” connections on to the City lateral or main sewer lines from their build sewer or private lateral lines, even though these connections are on the city property.
3. Following are some simple steps you can follow to prevent sewer backups on your property:
 - **DON’T** dispose of any grease in the drain
 - **DON’T** flush paper products (disposable diapers, paper towels, etc.)
 - **DON’T** plant trees near your building sewer and city lateral sewer lines.
 - **DON’T** connect French drains, downspouts, sump pumps, etc. directly into the sewer line.
 - **DO** install a Backflow Prevention Valve.
 - **DO** maintain the cleanouts on your property.
4. Property owners are advised to call the City immediately (During the day from 7:00 am through 5:00 pm: 769-2376, or during after hours: 763-9472) in the event of sewer backups, which could possibly be caused by a problem in city lateral lines. The City will correct the problem if it is a city lateral problem. The property owner should call a private plumber if the problem is determined to be in the building sewer or private laterals.
5. The City will not pay for private plumber bills for problems of building sewer or private laterals.
6. Property owners should be aware that many property insurance policies exclude damage resulting from sewer backups. It is suggested that property owners check their policies and add this coverage. The city’s insurance will only pay for damage caused by negligence on the part of the City.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

- **Sewage is backing up into my house/building through overflowing toilets, sinks, bathtubs, dishwasher, and/or washing machines. What should I do?**

If these problems occur and you are not using your household water outlets, there may be a problem in the public main. Call City to request service. If your household water outlets are being used, turn them off to stop the running water. This indicates a possible problem in your building sewer. You need to call a plumbing company (located in the yellow pages of the phone book) since City is only responsible for lateral or main sewers not on private property.

If overflow is constant inside the building, the homeowner should remove the cap on the cleanout or overflow device (if present) located outside the building. The homeowner can use towels, sheets, rags, etc. to keep the sewage from spreading and damaging other parts of the house. City should be notified immediately if there is any spill inside or outside of the residence.

- **Sewage is overflowing from a sewer structure onto the ground, driveway, street, etc.**

Overflow devices are usually located near the building. They may have a lid or mushroom cap on top. Their purpose is to allow sewage from a plugged sewer to overflow outside of the building.

Manhole structures are usually located in the middle of the alley or street and provide access for cleaning and pipe inspection. The City's manhole structures are marked with "SEWER" on top.

Storm drains carry rainwater only and are usually under curb openings in the gutter. They are usually covered with a grate or slotted piece of metal. Some solid round covers are marked with "S" or "Storm Drain." Your City's Public Works Department is responsible for problems with storm drains.

- **I have slow drainage through my toilets, showers, and sinks. What can I do about it?**

If neighbors are having similar slow drainage, there is a chance that there is a problem in the public main. For service call the numbers listed above. If neighbors are not having a problem, you may need to call a plumbing company (yellow pages of phone book).

- **A contractor or utility company broke my building sewer or connection. What should I do?**

The responsible party shall repair the broken building sewer or connections to

City laterals or main sewer lines. The contractor or utility company is responsible for notifying the City immediately. Residents should call City numbers listed above. You should be prepared to provide the address or location.

- **What is the City's service responsibility?**

The City is responsible for the public lateral, main, and trunk sewer lines, most of which are located in the middle of the alleys, streets and/or in easements.

- **What is the property owner's responsibility?**

The property owner is responsible for the building sewer from the house, including the pipe and "Y" connection to the City lateral or main sewer lines.

- **What can I do about terrible sewer odors?**

First, try to determine where the odor is coming from (inside the house or outside in the street). If an odor is coming from inside the house, there may be a problem with the internal plumbing system. Check your internal system first or call a plumbing company. If the problem exists outdoors, call the City numbers listed above.