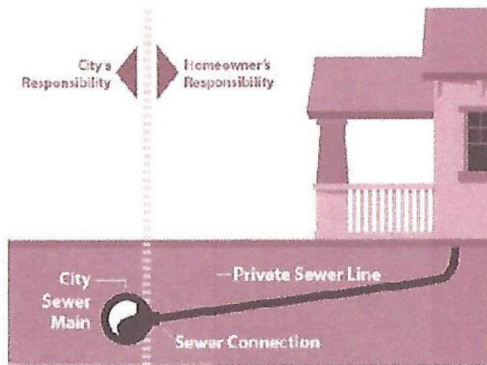


## How Does The Sewer System Work?

Homes connected to the municipal sanitary sewer system contain a service lateral line, or private sewer line, which connects to the municipal sewer main.



Waste travels from your home's plumbing system through the lateral to the municipal sewer main. Waste then travels through the municipal sewer lines to the EORWA treatment facility in Bellaire where it is properly managed.

## What Will Happen If I Call The City About A Sewer Backup?

- You will be asked questions about the backup timing, location, the property at risk, etc.
- City personnel will check for blockages in the main line. If found, the blockage will be immediately cleared.
- If the main line is not blocked, you will be advised to call a plumbing or sewer contractor to check your service line. Maintenance and repair of the service line is the owner's responsibility from the house to and including the connection to the city's main sewer. The main sewer line is owned and maintained by the City of Martins Ferry.
- To minimize damage and negative health effects, you should arrange for clean up of the property as soon as possible. There are qualified businesses that specialize in this type of cleanup and restoration.

## Preventing Sewer Backups In Your Home



### Informational Guide for Martins Ferry Residents

Martins Ferry Department of  
Public Service  
35 South 5th Street  
Martins Ferry, Ohio 43935  
(740) 633-6151

## How Do Sewer Backups Occur?

Sanitary sewers flow by gravity so they generally follow the natural slope of the ground. The sewer mains that the city owns and maintains are generally from eight to fifteen feet deep, with some being much deeper. Sanitary sewer backups can be caused by a number of factors. They usually involve sewer pipe blockages in either the city's main sewer lines or in the private sewer service line which the property owner owns and maintains (sewer line between buildings and the city's main sewer line).

Causes of a backup may include pipe breaks or cracks due to tree roots, system deterioration, insufficient system capacity due to residential or commercial growth, or construction mishaps.

In home and office plumbing systems, a frequent cause is accumulation of grease, tree roots, hair, or other solid materials, such as disposable diapers or sanitary napkins that are too large for wastewater pipes to handle. Such materials may cause major backups in city lines as well as in residents' private service lines. Another frequent cause of blockages within the city's system is vandalism. Leaves, sticks, rocks, bricks, and trash are sometimes found stuffed down manholes.

## What Can You Do To Help Prevent Sewer Backups?

- Make sure your home's downspouts and storm drains do not empty into sanitary sewer lines.
- Dispose of paper products and household trash in the garbage.
- Do not pour grease down the drain.
- Do not flush diapers or hygiene products down the toilet.
- Dispose of food scraps in the trash can.
- Do not plant trees or shrubs near your sewer lateral.
- Do not flush household chemicals down the drain.

## What You Should Do If You Experience A Sewer Backup

First, take action to protect people and valuable property:

- Keeping in mind that ceramic plumbing fixtures such as toilets are fragile, quickly close all drain openings with stoppers or plugs. Tub, sink and floor drains may need additional weight to keep them sealed. A string mop can be used to help plug toilet openings.
- Don't run any water down your drains until the blockage has been cleared.
- A quick check with nearby neighbors will help determine if the backup appears to be in your neighbor's wastewater line, and/or widespread in your neighborhood. In this case, call the Service Department immediately at 633-6151 or after hours call 633-2121.