

TROUBLESHOOTING SEWER BACKUPS

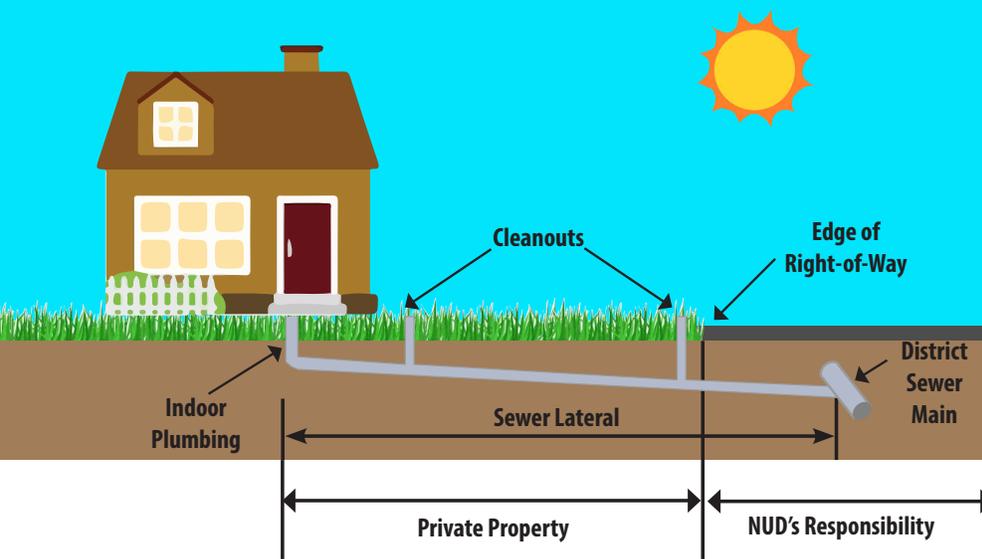
Helpful Tips from Northshore Utility District

Sewer backups can be extremely unpleasant and expensive. It's important to resolve the problem as quickly as possible to eliminate exposure to potentially harmful bacteria and viruses.

WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY IS IT? As shown in the diagram below, you are responsible for maintaining the side sewer that runs from your home to the public sewer main. But while most city jurisdictions only care for the main to the connection point, Northshore Utility District actually takes responsibility for backups that occur in the easement, or public Right of Way—these carry the heaviest costs due to the road work involved.

DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR PRIVATE VS. PUBLIC SEWER LINES

Homeowners own responsibility for all sewer line issues occurring or originating on your private sewer lateral, up to the public right-of-way.



IF YOU EXPERIENCE A SEWER BACKUP, PLEASE CALL US FIRST!

We can provide you with:

- ▶ Asbuilts, or drawings of your side sewer location.
- ▶ Assistance in determining limits of responsibility.
- ▶ Advice to help troubleshoot the issue.

For emergencies, we are available 24 hours a day at (425) 398-4400.

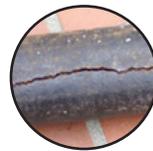
WHAT CAUSES SEWER PROBLEMS? The following are the most common sources of sewer failures:



FATS, OILS, AND GREASE (F.O.G.) buildup leads to blockage. To prevent this, scrape and wipe dishes into the compost/trash first before washing, and avoid using garbage disposals. Cool heavy grease in a covered container and trash.



TREE ROOT INFILTRATION. This occurs more frequently with older pipes. Modern side sewer pipes are heavy-duty, water-tight plastic which last much longer.



STRUCTURAL DEFECTS IN THE PIPE. Defects including misaligned pipes, pipe collapses, and cracks or holes in the line. These can develop over time and eventually cause major damage.



WIPES AND OTHER FLUSHED DEBRIS. NO wipes are flushable, no matter the product claims. Only toilet paper and human waste should go into the sewer. **Other common backup-causing debris:** dirt, hair, tampons, paper towels, kitty litter and garbage.



GRADE/SLOPE PROBLEMS. If the slope of your private sewer line is too gradual or flat, you may encounter more frequent blockages. (Photo courtesy of www.hydro-physics.com/common-problems/)

If you notice slow drainage or suspect a blockage, the problem is likely in your private side sewer. Take action quickly to limit health risks. The following page contains information that may help you in getting the backup resolved.

YOU HAVE A SEWER BACKUP—NOW WHAT?

CALL US FIRST! (425) 398-4400
(24-hr Emergency Line)

Call NUD immediately if sewage is coming up inside your home. Although most sewer issues are isolated to your private line, a crew can check the District's sewer and notify you of the results of their investigation as soon as possible. District crews maintain the main sewer lines and connections located in the Right of Way.

Clean Up the Backup

PROTECT YOUR HEALTH
PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY



DO YOU HAVE SEWAGE BACKING UP INTO YOUR HOME?

See SPU brochure "Clean Up the Backup" for guidelines on protecting your family from sewage hazards, link available at www.nud.net.

CONTACTING A PRIVATE COMPANY: Companies offer a full range of services—unblocking, repairing, and replacing sewer lines or pipe. Some specialize only in certain areas. Make sure to ask which services are provided.

- ▶ **ROOTER SERVICES** unplug plumbing and private side sewers using water pressure or mechanical "snakes." Make sure the roofer service's snake cable is long enough to reach from your side sewer to the District's main sewer line (typically located underneath the street). Rooter companies also might repair and/or replace side sewers areas.
- ▶ **SIDE SEWER CONTRACTORS** repair structural problems, such as breaks or holes in side sewers. Some contractors also might replace or unplug sewer lines.
- ▶ **PLUMBERS** repair leaky or broken fixtures and they install systems in new construction and remodeling. If only some of your fixtures are not draining, or if your pipes are leaking, a plumber might be able to remedy the problem.

HIRING A PRIVATE COMPANY:

As a public entity, NUD is unable to recommend any companies or contractors. But these steps should help you find a good service provider.

1. Get at least three written bids before hiring to have a high/low price comparison.
2. Ask friends and relatives for recommendations.
3. Check with the Better Business Bureau at (206) 431-2222 to find reputable companies.



QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS INFORMATION? Please contact us at (425) 398-4403 or dispatch@nud.net.

Information provided here is courtesy SPU brochure "Troubleshooting Your Sewer Problem."

QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD ASK:

WHERE IS THE BLOCKAGE? If your line is rootered, have the service provider write down the specific footage where the blockage was found (or where they think it is) and mark the spot on the ground. This information is helpful in determining if the problem is within the District's area of responsibility. The mark can help when making repairs.

WHAT IS CAUSING THE PROBLEM? Have the service provider write down the probable cause of the blockage. The type of blockage determines what method should be used to open it, and if regular maintenance of your side sewer is needed to prevent future backups.

SHOULD A TV CAMERA BE USED to see blockages in my line? TV cameras generally are not effective in determining what is blocking a line. They cannot see under water, so if a line is blocked and not draining, the camera won't be able to see inside. Camera inspections are most useful after the blockage has been cleared to determine the condition of your pipes and where future problems might turn up.