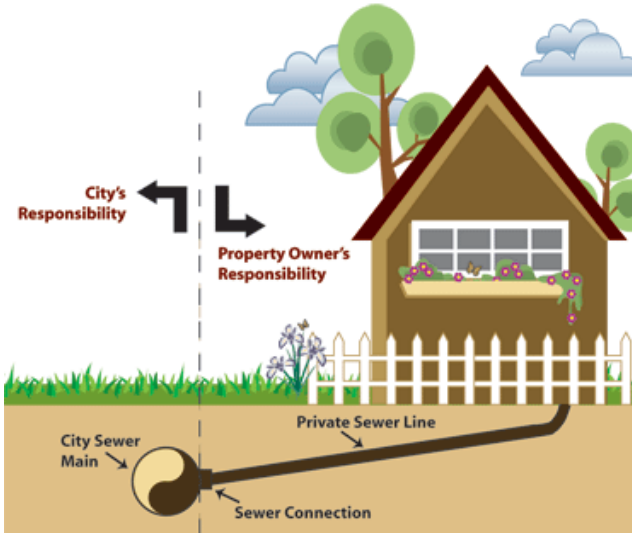


A sanitary sewer backup occurs when sewer lines are blocked and sewage backs up into your home through toilets, sinks, bathtubs or basement drains. Often, a sanitary sewer backup is the result of a blockage in the homeowner's private sewer line and is the responsibility of the homeowner to fix. If you experience a sanitary sewer backup, a private plumbing contractor can determine the cause of the problem.

A plumber may determine that your private sewer line is backing up because the city sewer line is blocked or overloaded, causing sewage to back up into your private sewer line. If you experience this problem, call LexCall at 311. If you call on the weekend or after normal business hours, LexCall will direct you to an emergency after-hours number.



### **For More Information**

LexCall  
(859) 425-CALL or 311  
[lexcall.lexingtonky.gov](http://lexcall.lexingtonky.gov)

Division of Water Quality  
(859) 425-2400 or 311  
[www.lexingtonky.gov/waterquality](http://www.lexingtonky.gov/waterquality)

Department of Environmental Quality & Public Works  
(859) 425-2800 or 311  
[www.livegreenlexington.com](http://www.livegreenlexington.com)

Lexington-Fayette County Health Department  
(859) 231-9791  
[www.lexingtonhealthdepartment.org](http://www.lexingtonhealthdepartment.org)

Kentucky Office of Insurance  
1-800-595-6053  
<http://insurance.ky.gov>

U.S. Small Business Administration  
[www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov)



### **How can LFUCG help if I have a backup?**

If you experience a sanitary sewer backup due to a blocked city sewer line, you may be eligible for cleaning assistance.

If a city crew assists with a sanitary sewer backup at your home, the claims process will be started for you. If you have questions about a claim, please contact the Division of Water Quality at (859) 425-2400 and ask for "claims."

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What Should I Do...  
if my home has a  
sanitary sewer  
backup?



# What should I do if my home has a sanitary sewer backup?

## Prevention Tips

If you know that your home is prone to sanitary sewer backups, you can take steps to protect your home. If you are purchasing a home, ask the previous homeowners if the home has experienced sanitary sewer backups. Call LexCall at 311 to find out if previous occupants have reported sewer backups.

- Purchase sanitary sewer backup insurance. In most cases, backups are not covered unless you purchase a special rider to your homeowners insurance policy to cover damages related to sewage backups or water damage. Contact your insurance company for more information.
- Know where your sanitary sewer cleanout is located. The cleanout is located within two feet of an outside wall, either indoors or outdoors. It is usually a white plastic or metal cap with a nut on top. Having your sanitary sewer inspected by a plumbing contractor can prevent problems, and the plumber will need to know the location of the cleanout.
- Avoid putting grease down the garbage disposal, and do not flush feminine hygiene products, diapers or paper towels down the toilet. This can lead to stoppages in both your home and city sanitary sewer lines.
- If the lowest level of your home is below ground level and has a drain or toilet, it may be affected by a sanitary sewer backup. Consider having a plumber install a backflow preventer to prevent sanitary sewer backups when it rains.
- Your furnace, water heater, washer, dryer and other appliances that are located in the basement should be raised 6"-10" off the floor.
- Avoid planting trees near your private sewer line that can spread roots and infiltrate your private sewer line.

## During a Backup

- First, take action to protect people and property. Make sure that pets and children are away from the sanitary sewer backup area. Move furniture and other valuables off the ground, preferably to a part of the house that is not experiencing a sanitary sewer backup.
- Turn off electricity and gas to the basement if possible, but do NOT enter any areas with standing water to avoid risk of electrocution.
- 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.
- If you have a backflow preventer, it will block sanitary sewer access during heavy downpours. Do not flush toilets, wash clothes, shower or run water down any drains during downpours or you will cause a sanitary sewer backup.
- Call a plumber to determine if the backup is in your private sewer line or the city's sewer line. If the blockage is in your private sewer line, your plumber can fix it.
- If a plumber determines that the blockage is located in the city sewer line, call LexCall at 311 immediately so that a crew can be sent out to address the problem.
- Avoid contact with the sanitary sewer backup, and always wear rubber gloves and boots if contact with sewage is unavoidable.



## After a Backup

- If you clean your basement yourself, wear gloves and wash your hands frequently. Rubber boots and a face mask can be worn for additional protection.
- Properly disinfect everything that the water from the sanitary sewer backup has touched.
- Be prepared to throw out belongings that cannot be safely disinfected, such as carpet, mattresses, stuffed animals and upholstered items.
- Residents of Fayette County may rent a Waste Management Loan-A-Box for debris. Call LexCall at 311 for more information.
- Dry out your home: open doors and windows to allow fresh air into your home, circulate the air with fans and run a dehumidifier.
- To restore gas or electricity to your home, call Kentucky Utilities at 1-800-981-0600, Bluegrass Energy at 1-888-546-4243, Columbia Gas at 1-800-432-9515 or your local provider.
- Take pictures of damage to your home and belongings. These may be useful when making a claim to your homeowners insurance. Keep receipts for expenses or repairs.
- A list of companies that provide special cleanup services is available in the yellow pages or at [www.yellowpages.com](http://www.yellowpages.com) under "Carpet, Rug and Upholstery Cleaning."
- If we determine that the sanitary sewer backup is the responsibility of the homeowner and you do not agree with our determination, you can dispute this determination. Contact Water Quality at (859) 425-2400 and ask for "claims."