

How Do I Dispose of Contaminated Material?



Guidelines as per Valparaiso Public Works Department.

- Items will be collected on your regular pickup day only.
- All loose debris (drywall scraps, toys, clothing, etc.) should be placed inside your city issued trash container. If you run out of room in your trash container, please use contractor bags or some other container for collection. **Please do not use your recycle container for flood debris.**
- Carpet must be tied or taped in rolls no longer than 4 feet and stacked neatly outside your trash container.
- Paneling or trim should be no longer than 4 feet and stacked neatly outside your trash container.
- Please call Public Works at 462-4612 to notify us whenever you are placing items outside your trash container or if you have any questions regarding the disposal of contaminated materials.

How to Prevent Sewer Backup

- Consider the installation of a backup prevention device. Backflow prevention devices must be installed by a licensed plumber. Contact your local plumbing professional for more information on the best methods and products.
- Do not plant trees and shrubs over the private building sewer. The roots of trees, particularly Silver Maple and Willow trees, will seek out the joints of the sanitary sewer and eventually clog the pipe.
- Do not put large amounts of vegetable waste, such as pea pods and tomato skins, through the garbage disposal at one time. Even though these materials will go through the garbage disposal, they may clog the private building sewer.
- Do not put large amounts of grease and paint down the drain. Over time these materials build up and eventually cause blockage. **Cooking grease is a primary cause of residential sewer blockages.** To prevent this, pour all fats, oils and greases into a coffee can or other durable container for disposal in your trash can. Dishes coated with greasy leftovers should be wiped clean with a paper towel before washing or placing in the dishwasher.
- If your washing machine drains into a sink, make sure to use a lint trap in that sink. It is easier to clean out the lint trap than it is to clean out the building sewer.
- If you smell sewer gas, check to see if all sewer traps are filled with water and check to see if the cap on the sewer cleanout is on tight. If the gas smell persists, call a local plumbing contractor to have your system checked.



Sewer Backups



A Property Owner's Guide To Managing a Sewer Backup



Valparaiso City Utilities
Customer Services Business
205 Billings Street
Valparaiso, IN 46383
Phone: 219-462-6174
Fax: 219-477-4254

Valparaiso City Utilities
Collections & Distribution
1855 Joliet Rd
Valparaiso, IN 46385
Phone: 219-462-6174

Sewer Backups

Sewer line maintenance is a shared responsibility. Property owners are responsible for maintenance of their sewer lateral line and the tap at the public sewer main. The Utilities is responsible for maintenance of the public sewer main itself.

Sewer lateral backups are most commonly the responsibility of the property owner. There are many reasons for backups which the Utilities cannot control. Examples of these types of backups are:

- Grease accumulations from dumping down the drain.
- Flushing of diapers, wipes or feminine hygiene products.
- Tree roots; tree roots can grow into and obstruct sewer lines.

Generally, the Utilities is responsible only if it was negligent in maintaining the public sewer main. If you feel that the damage occurred as a direct result of the Utilities' negligence, you can file an insurance claim by calling VCU at 219-462-6174 ex. 1349. Please provide the following in order to process a claim:

- Pictures
- Itemized list of damages with replacement cost
- Bills and/or estimates related to clean up

Sewage has backed up into my home.

What do I do now?

First assess the extent of the backup and what might be required to clean up contaminated belongings and furnishings. Contact your insurance carrier. Sometimes your homeowner's insurance will pay for sewer backups, but not all policies have this coverage.



The Cleanup Process

- **These are some examples of how to go about cleaning after a Backup.**
- To reduce health hazards, thoroughly clean the affected areas as soon as possible. **Use a cleaning solution of two tablespoons of chlorine bleach to one gallon of water.** *Please be careful as bleach can stain dark fabrics or carpets.*
- Remove moisture and debris from all surfaces and get surface materials dry within 24-48 hours. **Use outside air to dry your home. Open windows and doors and use an exhaust fan to remove moist air from the house. If available, use a room dehumidifier. Empty it often.**
- Wear a mask to prevent inhaling contaminated dust, especially if you have allergies. Consult your physician if you have questions.
- **Basement.** If your basement is completely flooded with rain water, begin pumping the water in stages, about one-third per day. You should not pump the water in your basement below the level of exterior floodwaters. If you do, saturated soil could cause the basement walls to collapse. If it is grey or sewer water it cannot be pumped outside in the grass.
- **Walls, Ceilings and Floors.** Open, clean, decontaminate and thoroughly dry cavities in walls, floors and ceilings. Release any water or mud that has been trapped in walls, ceilings or floor cavities. Allow walls to dry from the inside out. Remove and dispose of all interior wall finishing materials and insulation. Most plaster, wall-board or paneling is not recoverable.
- **Wet Floors or Hardwood.** Remove any moisture or debris. Scrub floors and woodwork within 48 hours using a stiff brush, water, detergent and disinfectant. Allow all wood to dry thoroughly.
- **Wet Carpeting.** Pull up waterlogged carpet immediately to prevent further floor damage. Carpet pad cannot be saved. Remove the pad and throw it away. Attempt to save carpets or throw rugs only if they would be very expensive to replace. When replacing carpets, clean

and dry your floors thoroughly before re-carpeting.

- **Wet Furniture.** Discard upholstered furniture if it has been exposed to water or contaminated material. Clean, rinse and disinfect wood furniture. Place wood furniture outside in a shady area so it will dry slowly. Throw out mattresses and pillows.
 - **Wet Appliances.** If your hot water heater became wet due to flooding, it should be replaced. The insulation typically can't be replaced and the burner or heating element might be damaged and could cause an explosion or fire if used. If in doubt, consult a professional service before using. If the furnace was flooded, have it inspected and serviced by a professional service before using.
 - **Soiled Clothing or Blankets.** Line-dry all articles before attempting to clean or treat them. After drying, brush off loose dirt and debris. Send "Dry Clean Only" items to a professional cleaner. Wash clothes several times in cold water. Add up to a cup of bleach per load of wash if it will not harm the clothing.
 - **Food.** Throw out any opened food or packaged foods that are not waterproof. Commercially canned foods can be salvaged if the labels are removed and the cans thoroughly washed with a bleach mixture and rinsed in clean water. Home-canned foods require additional care; after the jars containing home-canned foods have been washed and disinfected, the food should be boiled for 10 minutes before using.
- For large cleanups, contact a professional service for assistance.
- Your insurance carrier may provide specific instructions or have suggestions on which service or types of services to use and whether your insurance covers sewer backups or not.
 - You can also look in the Yellow Pages under "Water Damage Restoration" or "House Cleaning" for additional resources.