



We hope you never experience a sewer backup into your home but the District wants you to know that it can and does occur. Sewer backups can occur when a sewer line freezes – which are most common in sewer service lines installed at depths of less than five feet. During the winter months and even during the spring thaw, the frost is driven down into the ground and freezing of pipes can occur at deeper depths as well. A couple of problems that may be indicators that your service line is frozen or plugged, is if there is a slow drain, or one drain that is not draining properly, but others are.

Bleeder lines are also another cause of freeze-ups in your sewer service line. A drip can cause build-up of ice in the service line.

Another area that causes freeze-ups is a slow drip of condensation into the sewer service line, from certain types of furnaces. You should have a drip pan in which the condensation water collects and when the pan fills to a certain level, it will activate a pump, which will pump it into the sewer service line.

There are some houses in the District that are interconnected. In other words, two homes share a portion of a 4” service line. The District requires that each dwelling be connected separately to the sewer main but in the massive connections done in the early 1980’s, there were some interconnections made. In this setup, the shared sewer service line may be frozen, or blocked, and sewage could then backup into the other home. This can create a lot of damage especially because a lot of homes are not occupied for entire winter months, only to arrive in the spring and find their home flooded with sewage.

Backups can also occur when the District’s sewer main freezes, or a lift station malfunctions, or a manhole becomes clogged. A continuous backup of sewage into the home would indicate a problem within a sewer main. We are fortunate to have had very few backups over the years, and in each instance, only one house was affected. It is usually the house lowest in elevation near the problem.

We suggest that you speak to a plumber about preventive measures you can take to protect your home. There are several different types of back-flow preventers that can be installed on your sewer pipe to help prevent a sewage back-up into your home. Find out how and where your sewer service line is installed and whether it includes a lift station for service to the main. Proper maintenance of the lift station is important. Speak with your plumber about methods that will help him to thaw out your service line should it freeze up; for example, sufficient cleanouts.

Last but not least, if your home is not occupied full time during the winter months, either properly winterize the home or maintain a proper temperature so as to prevent freezing.

This message is not to alarm you but only to let you know that sewer backups can and do happen and to make you aware of what to look for and measures you should take to prevent such occurrences from happening in your home.