



**Department of Public Services**  
5228 South Isabella Road  
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858  
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## **SANITARY SEWER BACKUP PROCEDURE**

This Sanitary Sewer Blockage/Backup Procedure is provided to ensure that property owners, certified licensed technicians, and plumbers gain a clear understanding of the responsibilities of the property/homeowner and the Charter Township of Union with respect to sanitary sewer blockages and backups.

### **Key Definitions**

**Building Sewer** – a pipe, including manholes and inspection chambers, laid on private real property connecting a service connection with a building or structure.

**Locate** – to identify or discover the place or location of:

**Property Owner** – means any legal entity who is the Owner of the property and/or who has responsibility for the property. Homeowner may also be used.

**Sanitary Sewer Main** – is the pipe that collects wastewater (sewage) from one or more properties.

**Service Connection** – means a pipe and other material necessary to connect from a property line to the Township's sanitary sewer main.

The Charter Township of Union (Township) operates and maintains a sanitary sewer collection system that services many of the properties within the Township boundaries. The Township performs maintenance on its sanitary sewer system to ensure that it is in good working condition.

### **Blocked Sanitary Sewers**

Blockages in a sanitary sewer main may occur on occasion and can cause sewage to back-up into a residence. Sewer line blockages are caused by vegetation growing into the line and/or improper disposal of items such as grease, wipes, diapers, washing machine lint, and other items flushed down the toilet. Since the Township cannot prevent the inappropriate disposal of items into the sewer system, it is impossible to prevent all sewer blockages and back-ups, even with a routine maintenance and inspection program.

If a blockage occurs in the Township's sanitary sewer main, the Township Public Service Department will take action to clear the blockage. The Township endeavors to have employees available at all times to respond to sewer back-ups. Our staff will work with you to try and determine if the blockage is in the Township main (Township Responsibility) or in the service connection and



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building sewer (Property Owners Responsibility). If you have sewer backing up into your property your first call should be to the Charter Township of Union Public Service Department.

**If you have a sewer that is blocked or that is backing up, please call the Charter Township of Union immediately at 989-772-4600 Monday – Friday 8:30 am – 4:30 pm. After these hours call 989-772-6921.**

Property owners are responsible for providing maintenance and clearing of any blockages (roots, grease and/or other debris) found within the building sewer system and sanitary service connection. Any cost incurred by the property owner to inspect or clear a potential blockage is the responsibility of the property owner.

It is important to take prompt action to start clearing a blocked sewer line as failure to act in a timely manner may increase damage to your property and to neighboring properties. Informing the Township of any sewer back-up is critical so the line can be inspected to determine if the blockage is in the Township's sanitary sewer main or the homeowners service connection. The Township is not responsible for any cost incurred by the homeowner prior to the Township being notified of the blockage/backup and an investigation being completed by the Township.

In the event of a sewer back-up, you should document your actions. Try to take pictures of any damage caused by the sewer backup and write down information about the contacts you make and any actions taken. This information will be of value if your loss is covered by insurance.

### **Questions you should be asking your plumber or licensed technician**

(Document these items)

1. Did the plumber use a snake, root cutter or something else to clear the blockage?
2. If root cutter was used what size?  
*(Most services are 4" and a 2" root cutter will only temporarily relieve the problem but in most cases, it will back up again in time)*
3. How many times did the plumber work the line with the snake or root cutter?  
*(It usually takes several passes to make sure the blockage has been completely removed)*
4. What was the total distance root cut or snaked?  
*(This helps identify if the plumber has actually cleared the entire line or just a portion)*
5. Where was the blockage located?  
*(This helps you identify where your blockage was located)*



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6. Did the plumber suggest you do a CCTV inspection?

*(This can be a costly expense and recommended more so if there has been a history of sewer backups or problems)*

**If you have questions regarding the Township's sanitary sewer maintenance program, sewer back-up response or a specific incident, please contact the Public Service Department at 989-772-4600 ext. 224 or 223.**