

## **Sewer Backup Information from Collierville Public Services**

### **Are you prepared for sewer backup if it occurs at your home?**

If you experience a backup of the sewer or drains in your home, call Collierville Public Services at 901-457-2800 and our experienced crews will help determine where the blockage exists.

### **What is the Town's responsibility?**

The Town has invested hundreds of thousands of dollars over the last decade cleaning more than 300,000 feet of sewer mains. After this extensive cleaning, the Town uses robotic video technology to inspect the sewer mains for cleanliness and imperfections as well as establishing a video data base for future troubleshooting of the mains. Any mains that had deteriorated were rebuilt to improve the infrastructure and extend the life of the main for as much as 50 years into the future. Due to this work, sewer backup overflows in Collierville have been reduced from 68 in 2002 to 5 in 2014. Additionally, the Town has a continual sewer line maintenance program to clean and remove obstructions.

The Town of Collierville continually invests in the system infrastructure to ensure that our systems operate at the highest efficiency possible. However, a sewer is not a closed system and therefore a number of issues can clog the system such as tree roots, build-up of oil and grease, and vandalism.

If a Town sewer main becomes blocked, the Town dispatches a maintenance crew immediately to address the problem. Since each situation has its own unique set of circumstances, the following information will help you understand the responsibility and liability for damage from sewer backups:

- If an obstruction is in the Town's main, Collierville Public Services will fix it as soon as possible. In most cases, the Town's flushing equipment is used to restore the flow without digging to the sewer line.
- If the obstruction is in the private line connecting to the Town's main, our crews will inform you so you can contact your plumber to make the repairs.
- On 7-1-12 the Tennessee Municipal League Insurance Service notified numerous Tennessee communities that they will no longer offer No-Fault Sewer Backup coverage. Collierville was one of those communities notified of this change. Sewer backups are not routinely covered by homeowners' insurance policies so we advise that you contact your home owner insurance company to verify coverage for sewer backups. See the following policy for determining sewer service responsibility.

## Steps to avoid a sewer backup

- Plant trees and large shrubs a minimum of ten feet away from sewer lines. Roots grow toward breaks or cracks in the line and when roots get inside the pipe, they clog it.



Root Intrusion

- Never wash grease down the sink drain and be sure and
- use containers to collect the grease before disposing of it in the garbage.
- Avoid flushing products that are not bio-degradable such as: rags, towels, diapers, personal hygiene products.

## Sanitary sewer dos and don'ts

The following list of Do's and Don'ts can be used by everyone to help reduce the occurrences of sewer blockages in the Town of Collierville. Many people do not realize that even small amounts of fat, oil and grease (referred to as FOG) will build up over time and eventually clog up the sewer system. No amount of dish soap, hot water, or use of a garbage disposal will prevent the accumulation of FOG in the sewers. This directly affects the homeowner in that most of these sewer backups are going to happen between your home and the Town's sewer main, on your property. So why not save yourself the cost of a plumber, do your part to protect the environment, and help the Town, too!

### Do not:

- Allow FOG\* to go down the drain.
- Use the garbage disposal as a way to dispose of food scraps.
- Use the toilet as a wastebasket.



\*FOG – Fat, oil and grease build-up

**Do:**

- Pour and scrape excess grease into a container, cap it, and put it in the regular garbage.
- Scrape your plates and put other food scraps into waste containers or garbage bags and place them in the regular garbage.
- Use a wastebasket in the bathroom for disposable diapers, paper towels, wet wipes, personal hygiene items, cat litter and other things that don't belong in the toilet.
- Promote the “3 R’s”: Reduce...Reuse...Recycle!
- Check and make sure that your sewer cleanout is capped.

Call the Division of Public Utilities at 457-2800 with any questions.