

## CHENEY SANITARY SEWER BACKUP POLICY

An overflow in a wastewater line generally results from a blockage in the main line which causes the wastewater to backup into nearby pipes and drains. Stoppages can occur not only in the main sewer lines outside your home, but also within your home or office plumbing system.

If and when a backup occurs in a City maintained line, the wastewater will normally overflow out of the lowest possible opening, which is usually a manhole. However in some cases, the overflowing wastewater may exit through lower drains and toilets. If the lowest level of your home or office is above ground level, chances are slim that you will ever have a problem with overflows from the City's wastewater lines. However, if the lowest level is below ground level, there is a slightly higher possibility that you may one day be affected by a backup.

In home and office plumbing systems, the main cause is accumulation of grease, other solids and roots from trees. Also, many items which are too large for wastewater pipes to handle such as disposable diapers and sanitary napkins are often flushed down toilets. Never put disposable diapers or sanitary napkins down the toilet. These were not meant to be disposed of in this manner and besides stopping up lines, could damage your plumbing system. Avoid putting grease down your garbage disposal or any household drain. Not only could it accumulate in City lines, it could also build up in your own system and might eventually require the services of a plumber. All of these items can cause major backups in the City's lines as well.

In the event of a wastewater backup into your home or office quickly close all drain openings with stoppers or plugs. Keep in mind that ceramic plumbing fixtures such as toilets are fragile. Tub, sink and floor drains may need additional weight to keep them sealed. A string mop can be used to help plug toilets. If you suspect the stoppage is in your home plumbing system, don't run any water down your drains until you or a plumber has cleared the cause of the backup. If the backup appears to be in your neighborhood's main wastewater line, call the Sewer Department immediately at the numbers listed below. A quick check with adjacent neighbors will help you determine if the blockage is widespread or if it is limited just to your home.

**The City will not pay for private plumber bills or service calls for problems of building sewer or private laterals.** Call the City first to check if the main is blocked. The City of Cheney makes every attempt to prevent backups in the public wastewater system before they occur. Sewer lines are designed to prevent accumulation and blockages.

In the majority of cases, a special rider on your homeowner's or renter's insurance policy is needed to cover damages related to sewage backups or water damage. This optional coverage is generally inexpensive. However, you must usually request it as it is not automatically included in most policies. Customers who may be vulnerable to backups such as those with below grade fixtures are especially advised to investigate this option. Properties with below grade fixtures should investigate the need to install a backflow valve on the lowest drain line(s) that discharges to the City sanitary sewer system. This type of valve allows wastewater to discharge from the property but prevents flow from entering the

structure from the City sewer line. Building codes require a backwater valve on homes with below grade drains.

Like the majority of municipalities around the country, the City of Cheney cannot assume financial liability for damages resulting from sewage backups, since most blockages are related to conditions that are beyond the City's control. This is why it is important to verify that you are adequately insured.

If the backup appears to be in the City's main line sewer, call the Sewer Department immediately. Crews from the City's Maintenance Department are on call 24 hours a day to assist you. If it is verified that the blockage is in your home's sewer line that runs from the main line to your waste pipe, call a plumber of your choice to clear the obstruction.

If you notice any case of vandalism to the sewer lines or manholes, or observe wastewater bubbling out of a manhole, please contact the Sewer Department immediately.

IF A SANITARY SEWER BACKUP OCCURS, CONTACT THE SEWER DEPARTMENT AT 542-3622 MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY 8:00 A.M. TO 5:00P.M.

OR CALL THE CHENEY MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT 24 HOURS, WEEKENDS AND HOLIDAYS ONLY AT 542-3815.

Adopted by the City Council this 12day, April 2009

Approved by the Mayor this 12day, April 2009

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MAYOR, LINDA BALL

SEAL

ATTEST

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CITY CLERK, JIMMIE R. DISKIN