

What is the property owner's responsibility?

The property owner is responsible for cleaning and maintenance of the lateral from the home to the City main, including the connection to the main.

Is my service affected by what I put down the drain?

Root intrusion is the most common cause of slow drainage or blockage. However, disposal of items such as grease, motor oil, eggshells, coffee grounds, and cat litter in toilets or garbage disposals frequently clogs the home sewer lateral and/or the main municipal sewer line and is prohibited. For a complete listing of prohibited items, see [Bloomington City Code, Ch. 11.31 \(b\)](#). (And please, **never** dispose of any prohibited items in storm drains.)

What kinds of problems do fats, oils and grease cause?

A leading cause of sewer blockages across the U.S. is the accumulation of fats, oils and grease (FOG) in sanitary sewer systems. Correcting a blockage can be expensive. If a blockage occurs in a service lateral, it will be the owner's responsibility to relieve the blockage. If a blockage occurs in the City's collection system, the maintenance costs are covered by all sewer utility rate payers. The City of Bloomington has an ongoing, proactive sewer cleaning program that properly maintains the collection system. Minnesota courts have found that property damage resulting from a sewer backup into a private home or business caused by the illicit disposal of prohibited substances is each property owner's responsibility.

What can I do to prevent sewer backups from fats, oils and grease?

DO NOT pour fats, oils and grease from cooking down the drain. Collect the grease in a metal can (soup cans work great), and once the grease has cooled and solidified, place it in the trash for disposal.

Useful facts about grease disposal:

- Garbage disposals do nothing to protect sewer lines from grease buildup. Use disposals sparingly.
- Dishwashing detergents do not protect sewer lines from grease buildup. While it is true they initially break up the grease, they eventually lose this ability and grease will then accumulate in sewer lines.
- Chasing grease down the drain with hot water only causes the grease to buildup elsewhere.

What other items should not be put down the drain or flushed down the toilet?

Anything that will not totally dissolve and breakdown in water can cause a sewer blockage in residential and municipal lines. Besides the fats, oils and grease mentioned above, paper towels, disposable diapers, sanitary napkins, bandages, rags, towels, underwear, panty hose, plastic bags and cat litter should not be flushed.

What about periodic or preventative sewer cleaning by a homeowner or a contractor?

Periodic cleaning is recommended only in cases of a known problem, such as root intrusion. Consult a plumbing professional to determine the cause of the problem and determine the most cost effective solution for your situation.

Root intrusion problems

Root intrusion is the most common reason for slow drainage or a blockage. Management of chronic root problems can be expensive and difficult to schedule, as root activity can be unpredictable. The disposal of prohibited items in a sewer service can dramatically compound slow drainage or blockage. Items become tangled or lodged in a relatively small root mass and become a large blockage in a short time period. The most effective solution to root intrusion is evaluation by video camera and possible excavation and repair. The City urges residents to seek reputable contractors in such cases and request multiple estimates for any proposed work. For more information, see the *Sanitary Sewer Service Repairs Handout*.

Utilities Customer Service 952-563-8777

This information is a guide to the most common questions. It is not intended, nor shall it be considered, a complete set of requirements.