

PROTECTING YOUR PIPES PREVENTING SEWER BACK-UPS



*A common sense guide
to help you
protect your plumbing
and the environment.*



Prepared for you by:

**City of Havre de Grace
Department of Public Works**

Where is Your Clean-out?



It is important to know **what a Clean-out is** and **where it is located** on your property.

What is a Clean-out?

The Clean-out is a vertical pipe located near the property line that rises from your sewer line to ground level and is capped. *The picture above shows what you should be looking for.* A Clean-out may also be made of metal.

Where is it located on my property?

A Clean-out should be near the front side of your property line, within 18 inches of the curb. Sometimes it is located closer to your house or even in the back yard.

What is a Clean-out used for?

The Clean-out is used by City crews to determine whether a stoppage occurred on the homeowner's side or the City's side of the sewer lateral. They open the cap using a special tool and look for a clogged system.

As a property owner, you are responsible for your Clean-out. If the Clean-out is buried, a registered plumber should be able to locate and raise it for you.

The City of Havre de Grace urges you to use this easy tip to keep your sewer pipes clear:

Don't use your toilet, sink or any drains as a garbage can.

Grease from cooking oil, shortening, butter and margarine, meat, food scraps, baking goods, sauces and dairy products need to go into the garbage can. **(Pour the grease into a can, seal it and then throw away with your regular garbage.)**

The same goes for sanitary napkins, other feminine products, diapers and wipes....trash can please.

CITY OF HAVRE DE GRACE

**Dept. of Public Works
711 Pennington Avenue
Havre de Grace, MD 21078**

**Call 410-939-1800 x-1130
Monday-Friday 8am to 5pm
After 5pm and weekends, call:
410-939-2121**

What Causes Sewer Back-ups?

Anything which should not be in a sewer line has the potential of causing a blockage. **Kitchen grease, disposable diapers, sanitary napkins, and wipes** can accumulate and cause a blockage.

Tree roots seeking moisture can grow through cracks in the lines causing a blockage.

Illegal hookups allow excess water into the lines. **Outside stairwell drains, sump pumps, roof leaders, and drain gutters** should never be connected to the sewer system.

A sewer system is designed to carry a predetermined amount of sewage. Rain water not only overloads the system, but also raises the cost of the treatment system.



Did You Know?



Even when marketed as “flushable” cleansing WIPES do not dissolve!

WIPES get hung up in the sewer pipes. This causes an immediate problem for the homeowner as it is likely to cause backups in the home or in the City’s sewer system.

Studies show that flushing wipes is a **costly problem** for Public Works Departments throughout the country ... and is so easily avoidable!

WIPES go into a GARBAGE Can!

NOT the Toilet!



What Can I do to Prevent Back-ups?

A few simple **Do’s** and **Don’ts** to protect your property:

“Pouring grease down the drain and then running hot water will NOT clear it out.”

What really happens is...

- the grease cools down,
- then the grease congeals and finally
- it coats the pipes.



When enough grease builds up, it can block your plumbing or the City’s sewer lines.

DON’T put sanitary napkins, feminine products, diapers or wipes in the toilet.

DON’T plant trees near sewer lines.

DON’T connect any drains or sump pumps to the sewer system.

DO replace broken or missing Clean-out caps to help prevent debris and rainwater from entering the line.

DO check your homeowners insurance policy. If you are not covered for back-ups, call your agent for information on costs and coverage options.



DON’T ever pour grease down the sink or other drains.

DO wipe skillets with a paper towel and throw paper towel away in the trash.

DO pour grease into a can then throw away in the trash.