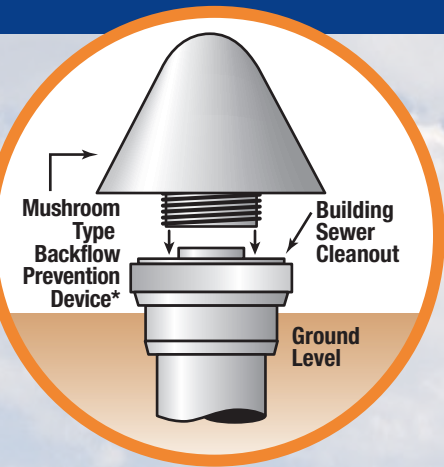
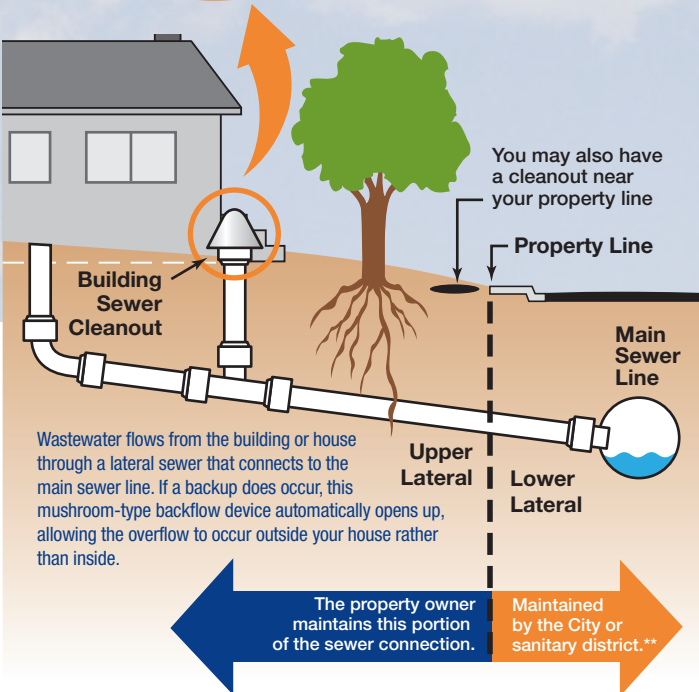


# Be Sewer Smart!

## This Rainy Season



A Backflow Prevention Device (BPD) can save you from the very unpleasant and costly experience of a sewage backup into your home.

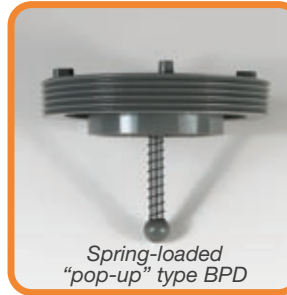


\* There are other varieties of devices. Visit [www.sewersmart.org](http://www.sewersmart.org).  
 \*\* Note that the responsibilities may vary in your community. Be sure to check with your local City or sanitary district.

## Protect Your Home from Sewage Backflows

Wherever a sewer system exists, so does the potential for backflows

Sewer main lines can become blocked due to roots, grease buildup or debris in the pipes. When this occurs, wastewater is stopped by the blockage and then backs up toward the first possible outlet – usually a manhole. However, sometimes the outlet is a fixture or drain inside a home or business. Many backflows are relatively small and can be cleaned up quickly. Left unattended, however, they can result in significant property damage.



When a wastewater backflow occurs, contact your City's Public Works Department or local sanitary district as soon as possible. Their crews locate the blockage and determine if it is in the public portion of the sewer; if it is, the crew removes the blockage.

### Property owners are responsible for internal plumbing and lateral pipes

If a backup occurs within private internal plumbing or in the lateral pipe that connects private property to the public sewer, this is the property owner's responsibility. You should contact a licensed plumbing contractor to make repairs. A permit is usually required for sewer work outside of a building. **Be sure to check with your City or local sanitary district regarding any special requirements.**

### Thanks for being Sewer Smart!

Follow our step-by-step guide and visit our website at [www.sewersmart.org](http://www.sewersmart.org). If you think your home may be at risk of a sewer backup, protect your home and install a Backflow Prevention Device (BPD). You'll find samples of BPDs on our website.

For more information as to whether or not your house is at risk of a backup, visit [www.sewersmart.org](http://www.sewersmart.org).

Thanks for being Sewer Smart!



# Be Sewer Smart!

## Prevent Backups This Rainy Season



Protect your home

## Here's how to determine if you are at risk of a sewer backup.

Your home is at risk if, at its lowest level, your home is not at least one foot above the nearest upstream manhole of the sewer main. In some homes, the garage may have a floor drain that also must be assessed in relation to the nearest upstream manhole.



In this photo, the gray house is at risk. The pink house may be at risk if it has a floor drain in the garage. Most likely, the house on the left is not at risk.

This step-by-step property walk-through guide will help you find your sewer lateral, the sewer main and next upstream manhole to help you determine if you are at risk.



### Where's my lateral?

- 1 First of all go to the curb and look for an "s" stamped into the concrete.



It's sometimes painted green. If you can't find one, look around your property line for something marked "sewer." This may look like a smaller manhole. This is where your curb cleanout is located.

A cleanout may be close to your home and not at the property line.



New homes and remodeled homes may have two cleanouts. You can draw a line between your cleanouts see where your lateral is between your house and curb cleanouts. This is your upper lateral. Why is that important? You don't want to plant a tree right over it or dig very deep over your lateral.

Remodeled home with two cleanouts

## Where's the main?

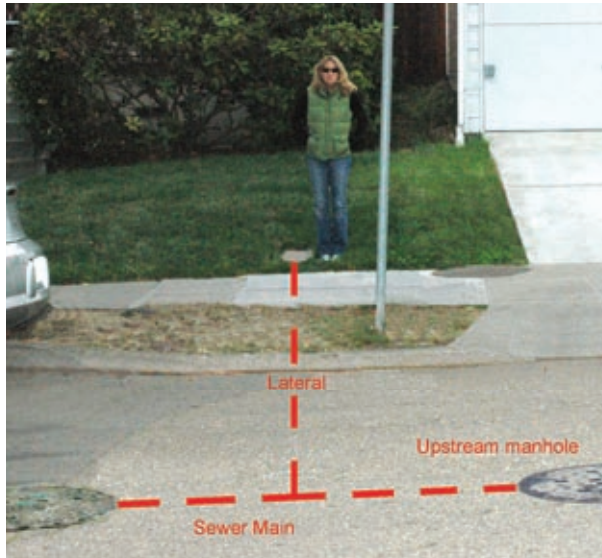
**2** Standing on your curb, look out into the street and find the nearest upstream manhole in front of your house.



Connect it to the next nearest manhole so that the dotted line passes in front of your house. The main is located under the street at that dotted line.

## Where does my lateral join the main?

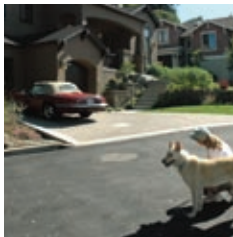
**3** You can connect the dots between curb cleanout and the dotted line between manholes in the street. Your lower lateral is not going to connect where the manhole is, but about 5-10 yards straight out from your curb cleanout where it hits the dotted line where the main line passes your property between the manholes.



Your home's upper lateral runs between the two cleanouts. Your lower lateral runs from the curb cleanout to where the main runs under the street.

## How do I know if my house is at risk?

**4** Now that you have located where your lateral joins your sewer main, locate the nearest upstream manhole in the street.



Stand on the manhole cover or stand at your house. Does your lowest elevation or basement appear to be at least 1 foot above the manhole? Compare it to the elevation of the manhole. Remember, your lowest drain may be in your garage or basement where you have plumbing.

▲  
If the lowest elevation does not appear to be equal to or at least 1 foot above the manhole, you may be at risk.

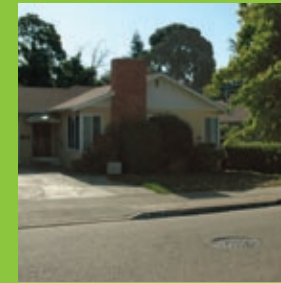


Cleanout with BPD

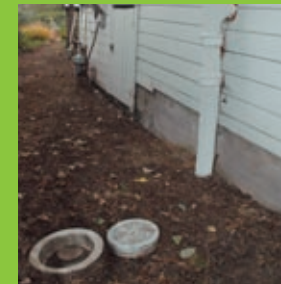
People who live in hilly areas, especially those on the downside of the street, are most at risk.

If you are unsure, put on a Backflow Prevention Device BPD anyway per your local requirements.

# Sewer Smart Tips



If you live in a flat area – you may have difficulty figuring out which direction the sewer flows. You can ask your plumber or call your sewer or sanitation district, located in the phone book under Government listings for wastewater utility services.



If your home was built or remodeled after 1962, most local building codes require that your sewer system has a cleanout and a Backflow Prevention Device (also called a sewer relief device).