



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MSD Prioritizing Damage Claims to Help Residents with “Life Safety” Issues and Out-of-Pocket Expenses

CINCINNATI – The Metropolitan Sewer District of Greater Cincinnati (MSD) is prioritizing its damage claims process to first take care of people with “life safety” issues and out-of-pocket expenses resulting from the catastrophic rainstorm on August 28.

The highest priority is for “life safety” issues such as lack of electricity, HVAC and/or hot water. The second highest priority is to reimburse any out-of-pocket expenses incurred by residents to pay for cleanup services or repairs to household mechanicals. After these efforts are well underway, MSD will begin processing claims for structural and personal property damage.

“The storm of August 28 was a catastrophic event that left people without basic needs,” said MSD Director Gerald Checco. “We have customers out there who haven’t had electricity or hot water for the last two weeks. We are prioritizing our response to this group of people to help them get back on their feet and in safe living conditions.”

MSD will process claims for structural damage and destroyed property as quickly as possible. However, due to the high volume of claims coming in, MSD cannot guarantee a response within 60 days, as noted on the claim form.

“MSD would like to express its concern for those who were impacted by this historic storm,” said Director Checco. “Please know that we are committed to helping the community get through this hardship.”

MSD’s Sewer Backup Response (SBU) Program: MSD received more than 1,900 reports of sewer backups in homes, following the rain storm. MSD has confirmed about 1,600 or 95% as backups caused by a lack of capacity in the public sewer system. *Note: The remaining ~300 were either solely overland flooding or a blockage or failure of the property owner’s private building sewer, which connects household plumbing to the public sewer.*

Of the 1,600 confirmed backups, about 850 cleanups have been performed or scheduled by MSD contractors and about 550 cleanups have been performed by a private contractor or self-cleaned (did not use professional contractors). *Residents who self-cleaned their homes are eligible for a cleanup performed by MSD.* MSD has been unable to reach the remaining 200 households, as they have not returned phone calls from MSD to schedule a cleanup.

“This is the highest volume of reports ever received for a single rain event since our Sewer Backup Response Program (SBU) program was established in 2004,” said Director Checco. “MSD confirms an average of about 400 sewer backups over the course of an entire year and multiple rain events. Following the historic rainstorm of August 28, MSD confirmed 1,500 backups resulting from a single night of rain, nearly four times the annual average.”

The worst rain fell in Norwood, St. Bernard and neighborhoods in eastern and central Cincinnati, which are all on a combined sewer system that carries both rainwater and sewage in the same pipe. Most of the sewer backups resulting from this storm were caused by a lack of a capacity in the sewer system. Combined sewers, constructed from the late 1800s through the 1950s, fill up with stormwater during heavy rains and overflow into streams and rivers and back up into buildings through floor drains.

“Although combined sewers are now being replaced with separate sanitary and storm sewers, no sewer system, regardless of how well designed, could realistically be constructed to handle the amount of rainfall experienced on August 28,” said Director Checco. “This was a natural disaster.”

For more information on the cleanup and claims process, please visit MSD’s Sewer Backup Response (SBU) website at sbu.msdc.org. An SBU Claim Form can be downloaded from the website. Please call 352-4900 if you need the SBU Claim Form mailed to you.

Fixing the Sewer System:

MSD is working to reduce sewer backups during a typical rain event through Project Groundwork, a multi-year initiative that includes hundreds of sewer improvement and stormwater control projects across Hamilton County. For more information about Project Groundwork, visit www.projectgroundwork.org.

For more information about MSD’s SBU program, including cleanup and damage claims assistance, or to report a sewer backup, visit sbu.msdc.org or call (513) 352-4900, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

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