

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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UPDATE: MSD Response to Sewer Backups

CINCINNATI – Here are three things you need to know now if you have experienced a sewer backup:

1. If possible, report sewer backups online in lieu of using our telephone hotline.

MSD has received more than 500 reports of potential sewer backups and counting. We are currently receiving a new report every minute or two. As a result, our telephone hotline (352-4900) is experiencing an extreme volume of calls. Please use our online reporting system at <http://sbu.msdc.org/sbu/page/report-sewer-backup.aspx> in lieu of calling the hotline. MSD does not handle street flooding or overland flooding, so please do not report these types of incidents.

2. Let us know if you have standing sewage.

If you currently have standing sewage in your home or business, please report or re-report this ASAP, including the depth of the sewage, at <http://sbu.msdc.org/sbu/page/report-sewer-backup.aspx>. MSD is sending out crews to pump out standing sewage from basements. In the interim, please stay out of any areas with standing sewage.

3. Arrange for your own cleanup, if at all possible.

It could take multiple days for an MSD crew to visit your home and investigate the sewer backup incident. We are encouraging you to contact your own restoration contractor for cleanup. MSD will reimburse you for reasonable costs, provided the sewer backup was caused by a capacity issue in the public sewer. This is determined through the

investigation by MSD crews. MSD will look at the amount of rainfall in your area and the capacity of the sewer.

Also please note that we have been informed that the American Red Cross will be setting up shelters for displaced residents. Please contact the American Red Cross for more info.

Background

The Metropolitan Sewer District of Greater Cincinnati (MSD) has received more than 500 reports and counting of potential sewer backups, following an historic rain storm that hit the Cincinnati area on August 28.

“This was well over a statistical ‘100 year’ storm,” said Mike Pittinger, who runs MSD’s collection division. “The worst rain fell in combined sewer areas within the central part of the City – largely between I-75 and I-71 – with significant problems in Avondale, Paddock Hills, Norwood, St Bernard, Oakley and Hyde Park.”

MSD has offered a Sewer Backup Response program (SBU) to MSD customers since 2004. The program provides:

- Free cleanup assistance for properties, provided the sewer backup was caused by the public sewer. Property owners are responsible for backups caused by blockages or failure of their private building sewer.
- Payment of damage claims, when eligibility criteria are met.
- Protection from future sewer backups for qualifying homes with a history of sewer backups.

On average, MSD responds to around 3,000 - 4,000 service requests a year related to potential sewer backups. The vast majority of sewer backups are actually caused by private building sewers that have failed, or are blocked by tree roots, grease or other “non-flushable” objects.

Sewage backups caused by the public sewer are primarily related to a lack of capacity in the sewer line. During heavy rains, the sewer system can fill up with stormwater, overwhelming the ability of the sewer to carry the flow to a treatment plant. This can result in sewer overflows into local streams and rivers and backups into the street and homes and other buildings.

MSD is working to reduce sewer backups related to the public sewer system 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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