

August 28, 2016 Flooding Event

MSD's Commitment

The Metropolitan Sewer District of Greater Cincinnati (MSD) is committed to helping the community cope with the catastrophic rain event that occurred on August 28. We are responding to every request as soon as possible, given our available resources. We are working to expedite cleanups and the claims process, but delays are possible due to the high volume of requests received.

Putting it into Perspective

MSD confirms an average of about **400 sewer backups** over the course of an entire year and multiple rain events. Following the historic rainstorm on August 28, MSD confirmed more than **1,700 backups** from a single night of rain, more than four times the annual average.

The rainstorm that struck the Cincinnati area was a catastrophic event. The worst rain - up to 5.5 inches in two hours - fell on 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.

The storm caused overland and street flooding, combined sewer overflows into creeks and rivers and sewer backups into homes and other buildings.

What Causes a Sewer Backup?

Most of the sewer backups resulting from this storm were caused by a lack of a capacity in the combined sewer system. Combined sewers, constructed from the late 1800s through the 1950s, filled up with rainwater and started overflowing into streams and rivers and backing up into buildings through floor drains, toilets and other plumbing. No sewer system is designed to handle the volume of rain received on August 28.

Can I Get Help from MSD?

MSD created a Sewer Backup Response (SBU) program in 2004. Here's the MSD process for sewer backups:

Step 1 - REPORT

If you believe you have experienced a sewer backup in your home, you need to report the backup to MSD at 352-4900 or online at sbu.msdcg.org.

Step 2 - CONFIRM

MSD investigates all reports of sewer backups to determine the root cause. If a backup is confirmed as a result of a capacity issue in the public sewer, the property owner is eligible for assistance from MSD and moves on to Steps #3 and #4. If the backup is not confirmed, the property owner is responsible for cleanup and damages. Note: The SBU program does not cover damages caused by blockages or failure of a building's private sewer lateral or damages caused solely by overland flooding.

Step 3 - CLEAN

If your backup is confirmed by MSD, your property is referred for cleanup assistance at no cost to the homeowner. If you have been approved for a cleanup, MSD will contact you to schedule an appointment with a certified restoration contractor. You cannot schedule your own cleanup online.

If you want to hire your own restoration contractor, you will be reimbursed for reasonable costs. If you have self-cleaned your home (did not use a professional contractor), you are still eligible for a cleanup performed by MSD.

Step 4 - CLAIMS

MSD will reimburse customers for the reasonable value of property lost or destroyed and for structural damage to your home caused by the sewer backup. MSD will also reimburse customers for reasonable costs associated with a cleanup performed by a private contractor.

Given the high volume of claims anticipated to be submitted, MSD cannot guarantee a response to claims within 60 days, as noted on the claim form. Claim forms must be mailed in or dropped off to MSD's Wastewater Collection facility.