



DPWs Mission:

To respond promptly to customer service concerns,

To safeguard the environment,

To constantly respect the cost consciousness of the citizens of Anne Arundel County, and

To be a steward of the environment by maintaining a high quality of life that balances the need for a healthy natural environment with the need for a sustainable economy.

**Anne Arundel County
Dept. of Public Works**

2662 Riva Road
Annapolis, MD 21401-7374
www.aacounty.org/dpw

Important Contacts

**24-hour Utility
Emergency Service**
(410) 222-8400

**Emergency
Management**
(410) 222-0600

Constituent Services
(410) 222-2222

Police Department
(410) 222-8050

Fire Department
(410) 222-8200

**Utilities Billing
Information**
(410) 222-1144

Preventing Sewer Backups

A Homeowner's Guide

The following information serves as a guide for homeowners to prevent backups from occurring and the steps you should take to protect your property just in case you have to deal with this type of problem.

Plumbing 101?

Each day, millions of gallons of wastewater flows safely through small lines on your property to the larger county lines under the street. From the county lines, the sewage travels to one of the County's seven water reclamation facilities. Once wastewater is reclaimed, it is returned to the environment.

This quiet out of sight process can rear its ugly head when blockages occur in private or county sewer lines. The backed-up sewage will return to your home at its lowest points. Generally, through floor drains and basement toilets. The overflow will continue until the blockage is removed or until sewage is no longer entering the line.

Potential Causes	What to Do...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kitchen grease, disposable diapers and sanitary napkin accumulation. • Tree roots growing through cracks in the lines. • Putting harmful objects in manholes like bricks, wood, oil filters, bed springs and even Christmas trees. • Illegal connections to system allow excess water in County lines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call Emergency Services at 410-222-8400. • Sewer cleanouts help technicians determine if blockage is in customer or County line. If in county line, crews will break blockage. • Homeowners will need to contact a plumber when cleanout is inaccessible. • Discontinue inside water use.



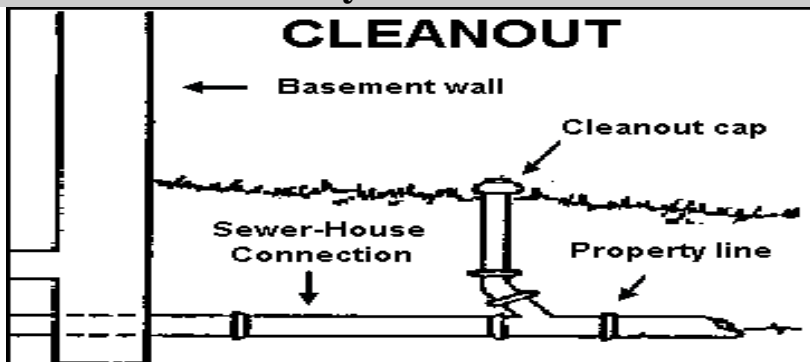
Anne Arundel County Executive
John R. Leopold



Preventing Sewer Back-ups continued....Where is my cleanout?

The cleanout is a pipe located near the property line that rises from your sewer line to about 4" above ground level and is capped. County crews can use this pipe to assess clogs and locate backups.

The clean-out is property owner's responsibility. If buried, a registered plumber should be able to locate and raise it. If hidden, you will need to make it easy for our crews to find.



IMPORTANT INFORMATION: A backup of sewage or water may occur through no fault of anyone. In this unlikely event, the County may not be responsible for the resulting damages. Please check your homeowner's policy. If you are not covered for this type of backup, obtain costs and coverage options from your insurance agent. If you do experience a back-up, save all receipts related to repair, cleaning and damages..

Back-Up Prevention Do's and Dont's

Do install a plumber's test plug (available at hardware stores) at the lowest floor drain in your home.

Do have a backflow valve on the lowest drain line installed. Regularly inspect and maintain valves.

Do modify the plumbing line so water is pumped to an upper level drain, eliminating lower level drain.

Don't flush diapers or sanitary napkins .

Don't put grease or harmful liquids down drain.

Don't plant trees near sewer lines.

Don't connect any drains or sump pumps.. Illegal connections add excess water to public sewer system.

No FROG. No Clog. Tips to Properly Dispose of Fats, Rags, Oil and Greases

When cleaning up after dinner, it is extremely convenient to wash everything down the kitchen sink. But, this practice could come at a very costly, unpleasant and unwelcomed price. Fats, cooking oils and grease poured down the drain can build up in pipes causing backups in your home, in the streets and in the sewer system. That is why the Anne Arundel County's Department of Public Works Bureau of Utilities encourages customers to properly dispose of Fats, Rags, Oil and Grease (FROG) by remembering the phrase, "No FROG. No Clog."

The following tips may help prevent a clogged drain and decrease the chance of costly repairs and cleanups:

- Throw bulk waste materials in the trash.
- Freeze small amounts of fats, oils and grease in a container with a tight-sealing lid and dispose of them in a trash receptacle.
- Mix cooking oil with an absorbent material such as cat litter or coffee grounds, place in a tightly-sealed container and dispose of them in a trash receptacle.
- Scrape and wipe excess grease from pans and dishes with a paper towel before washing.
- Prewash dishes and pans with cold water before putting them in the dishwasher.
- Use a strainer in your sink to catch scraps. Dispose in the garbage as needed.
- Use environmentally safe cleaning products instead of harsh detergents or cleaners that can damage sewer lines.

Important: Large amounts of grease should not be placed in the trash as containers may leak causing problems for garbage trucks and solid waste facilities. Large amounts of fats, oils and grease can be disposed at any of the County's Convenience Centers. For Convenience Center information visit www.aacounty.org/DPW/WasteManagement/convCtr.cfm.