



## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

### **Sewer Back-Up Policy**

The City of Auburn Hills DPW makes a concerted effort, through an intensive preventive maintenance program, to keep the sewer system in a good state of repair. Occasionally, however, conditions develop within the system that may cause sewage to back-up into a residence or business. The City of Auburn Hills is responsible for maintaining sewer mains and manholes which are located in public rights-of way and City-owned easements. Property owners are responsible for maintaining sewer laterals. The purpose of this policy is to make clear the property owner's responsibilities concerning the sewage lines located on their property and the steps a property owner should take if a sewage back-up occurs.

#### **Property Owner's Responsibility**

A property owner is responsible for keeping the building sewer line free from blockages between the structure(s) being served and the sewer main.

If a customer discovers a problem with his/her sewer connection and/or lateral, the customer should contact the DPW and request that Water & Sewer Maintenance personnel troubleshoot the cause of the problem. Water & Sewer Maintenance Staff will respond by inspecting the downstream wastewater collection main and the sewer lateral if a clean-out is located at the edge of and within the public road or utility right-of-way. The DPW will assist property owners in locating the problem, advise the property owner on action needed, and correct the problem if it is City responsibility. DPW Water & Sewer Maintenance crews are experienced employees who may be able to suggest a solution to your problem. However, they are NOT authorized to enter and clear stoppages on private property.

The City will not pay for private plumber bills unless the City directs that a plumber be called to solve a problem that is the City's responsibility. Property owners are advised to call the DPW immediately in the event of sewer back-ups, which could possibly be caused by a problem in City-maintained lines.

If a property owner has experienced a sewer back-up or if the residence or business is located in a low area or is lower than the street level, we suggest that a licensed plumber be consulted about the possibility of installing a backwater prevention device. This device, if properly installed and MAINTAINED, can prevent sewer from backing up into a house's or business' plumbing. The installation and maintenance of a backwater prevention device is the customer's responsibility and at the customer's expense.

Property owners should be aware that many property insurance policies exclude damage from sewer back-ups. It is suggested that property owners check their policies and add this coverage. The City of Auburn Hills will only pay for damage caused by negligence on the part of the City.

For more information about this policy, contact the City of Auburn Hills Department of Public Works at (248) 391-3777, or for emergencies at (248) 370-9444.