

Cedar Rapids Engineering Department Sewer Maintenance Division Most Common Causes of Sewer Backups

Sewer Backup Causes

There are three main categories for causes of sewer backups. A description of each is provided below.

Excess Flow: Excess flow will cause wastewater levels to rise in the sanitary sewer system and in some cases, result in basement backups. Excess flow usually is from groundwater or surface water that enters the sanitary sewer system through sump pumps, foundation drain connections or through pipe and manhole joints.

Structural Failure: Collapsed pipes block flow in the sewer resulting in sewer backups. Brick manholes are not uncommon in older sewers. Bricks can become dislodged and block flow in the sewer resulting in sewer backups. Service tap intrusions caused by settlement or structural failure may also block flow, resulting in sewer backups.

Debris in the Sanitary Sewer: Debris in the sanitary sewer includes roots, grease, sand, gravel, sediment, rags, paper products, construction materials and other objects. These types of objects can interfere with the flow of wastewater in the sanitary and result in sewer backups.