



ANTIETAM VALLEY MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY

providing sewer service to Mt. Penn Borough, Lower Alsace Township, portions of St. Lawrence Borough, Exeter Township & Reading City

RECENT HEAVY RAINS REMIND US ABOUT DEALING WITH SEWERS & PREVENTING BACKUPS

A sewer backup can create a stressful and emotional situation for the homeowner/renter. In some cases, it may cause health and safety concerns as well as significant property loss. A proper response to a sewer backup can greatly minimize property damage and diminish the threat of illness.

The Antietam Valley Municipal Authority makes every effort to be responsive to residents' needs and concerns when a sewer backup occurs. Unfortunately, many things that are put into the sewer can clog the system.

While AVMA has adopted rules prohibiting the discharge of any substance likely to cause reduced line capacity or a sewer obstruction, and we try to educate the public about the problems they cause, there is really no way we can absolutely prevent this from happening. Many homeowners' insurance policies exclude damage resulting from sewer backups. However, some insurance companies do provide sewer backup coverage. **If you are concerned about the possibility of a sewer backup and want to assure that you are covered, we urge you to check with your home insurer regarding the availability of sewer backup insurance, and include cleanup costs as well as repairs and replacement.** Courts have determined that local governments and Sewer Authorities are liable only if there is negligent operation of a system. A local Authority cannot guarantee that a public system will not backup. Items such as disposable diapers and grease that are placed into the system by residents can cause reduced sewer capacity and possibly unavoidable backups despite regular maintenance and cleaning of the public lines. **If you use your basement for storage of valuable items and/or have spent money refinishing your basement, we suggest purchasing extra insurance.** Also, you may want to check with your plumber about installing a backwater valve. It may cost you several hundred dollars but it may save your basement and valuables.

CONTACT INFORMATION: If you experience a sewer problem, please call AVMA at 610-779-0150. Backed up sewer lines, line breaks, sewage odors and overflowing manholes are considered an emergency. **CALL 610-779-0150 FIRST** before calling a plumber if you think you may have a problem. We will check the sewer main and lateral and then inform you of our findings. There is no cost to you for the Authority staff to check. Of course, we would prefer that you call during normal work hours to save all of us the expense of overtime. If the problem is not in the main line sewer or lateral, you will be advised to contact a plumber or sewer/drain cleaning service.