

Saanich Storm and Wastewater Contact Information

Staff are on call 24 hours a day to assist you. We respond to calls as soon as possible to determine the cause of the problem, take appropriate action and ensure affected areas are cleaned to mitigate health hazards to the public and protect the environment.

Call Public Works 24/7

250-475-5599

Learn More

Visit saanich.ca

- For more information about what can be done to prevent flooding, drainage and sewer backups.
- If you have repeated problems and have determined your sewer needs a repair.

Emergency Assistance Information

❖❖❖ Flooding, Drainage and Sewer Backup



Who Pays for the Damages?

The Municipality does not carry general liability insurance in the same way that a homeowner or business operator does. Rather it operates with large retentions (or deductibles) and therefore most losses are effectively self-insured. Therefore, it will only accept responsibility when there is evidence that the loss was caused by a negligent act or omission on its part.

If a person has insurance they are required, under the Insurance Act, to immediately notify their insurance company of the loss. If the insurance company believes the Municipality or another party is responsible for the loss then they will attempt recovery.

If a person does not have insurance and believes that the Municipality is responsible for any damage or injury sustained and wishes to make a claim, they are required, under Section 736 of the *Local Government Act*, to provide notice to the Municipality in writing of the time, place and manner in which the damage was sustained, within two months of the date the loss or damage occurred. Claim forms available on the Saanich website.

If you are unsure about how to file a claim, would like a claim form, or have questions about the investigation or status of the claim, please contact Saanich's Risk Management Division.

Depending on claim volume, it may take several weeks for a determination to be made about your claim. Please be patient.

Risk Management Division

Janice Andrews, Claims Analyst

250-475-5455

janice.andrews@saanich.ca

Saanich Storm and Wastewater Clean-up on Municipal Property

When flooding, drainage and sewer backups occur on municipal property, staff will assess its size, severity and location, level of public exposure and potential health risks to determine the best clean-up method.

General clean-up measures may include vacuuming, raking, disinfecting and deodorizing the site thoroughly. Hydrated lime is commonly used to disinfect sewage spills as it creates a dry alkaline environment in which bacteria cannot readily multiply. Because lime is a caustic material, access to the area treated with lime will be restricted during the disinfection period.

Public notifications and temporary signing may be carried out to mitigate potential public health and environmental concerns. A sampling and monitoring plan to ensure the effectiveness of the clean-up operations may also be implemented.

Residents that may be directly affected by the clean-up will be notified prior to, during or at the completion of the clean-up.



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We are here to help you.

Flooding, drainage and sewer backups are stressful and never pleasant to deal with. Saanich Storm and Wastewater understands the inconvenience this situation causes for homeowners.

What Causes Flooding and Sewer Backups?

Most flooding, drainage and sewer backups happen because the line is plugged with debris. This can be caused by overgrown tree roots, pipe collapse, heavy rainfall, main breaks and the condition of the sanitary sewer system itself.

In homes and businesses, a frequent cause is accumulation of grease, tree roots, hair or other solid materials that are too large for wastewater pipes to handle.

What Should I Do First?

Homeowners are responsible for determining where the blockage is located, regardless if it is on private or public property. A plumber should be called immediately.

If the plumber clearly identifies the blockage is on the municipal side, immediately contact Saanich Storm and Wastewater, who will want the plumber to remain on site to provide further assistance as required.



What Should I Do Next?

1. It is the homeowner's responsibility to take the first steps to minimize any further damage to personal property (i.e., remove undamaged items from the area).
2. Call your insurance agent advising of the damage as soon as possible and determine if your policy provides coverage.
3. Arrange for clean-up through your own resources or those of your insurer to remove excess water or sewage as soon as possible. Sewage can create health hazards and you may require professional assistance. Damage restoration companies are listed in the telephone directory.

Cleaning Up Your Property

Health and Safety Issues

Be aware of potential health and safety problems when addressing the clean-up of your home. Sewage and floodwater may contain bacteria, fecal material and other germs which can cause disease. These "germs" can be transmitted by touching contaminated items or by tracking them into uncontaminated areas on shoes. Children and pets are especially vulnerable. Odours from sewage backups are unpleasant but not harmful.

The speedy removal and clean-up of flooding and sewer water is very important and necessary. Professional assistance and clean-up is advised.



Protecting Yourself and Your Family

- Evacuate people and pets from any contaminated areas as soon as possible.
- Assume anything touched by flooding or sewage is contaminated.
- Clean and disinfect everything flooding or sewage has touched.
- Avoid direct skin contact with flood or sewer water.
- Always wear protective rubber gloves, eyewear and boots and be especially careful if you have cuts or open sores.
- Wash, disinfect, or discard any clothing and supplies immediately after use.
- Wash hands frequently, especially after bathroom use, before eating, and immediately following contact with flood, sewer or contaminated objectives/surfaces.
- Do not allow children or pets to play in areas contaminated by flooding or sewage until the areas have been properly cleaned.

Hiring a Professional vs. Cleaning Yourself

Cleaning up after a flood or backup is not a pleasant job. The decision to hire a professional remediation company or do your own clean-up comes down to time and money. If your homeowner's policy will pay for a professional to do the clean-up, most people will choose that path.

If you do not have insurance or your policy does not cover sewage backups, you may be faced with hiring a professional on your own or doing it yourself. You may also choose to hire a professional to perform an initial assessment to identify the extent of the damage and develop a scope of work for you to follow when performing the clean-up yourself.

Several scenarios would favour hiring a professional instead of doing the work yourself:

- When insurance will pay for it.
- When ductwork becomes contaminated with sewage in homes with forced hot air and/or central air conditioning.
- When sewage remains indoors for over 24 hours in a finished living space.