

## Is your home safe from a possible sewer back up?

Many homes naturally prevent sewage backups due to their plumbing design or location. One key to prevent sewage backups from entering your home is to know your location in relation to the sanitary sewer system that serves your home. Homes with drains located below the elevation of manholes on nearby streets may be in danger from sewage backups. In this situation, a backwater valve can offer tremendous benefits. A backwater valve is a plumbing component used to prevent sewage from backing up into a home. A backwater valve contains an automated gate that senses a reverse flow in the pipe and completely closes the line.

The Idaho Plumbing Code currently requires that when a fixture is installed on a floor level that is lower than the next upstream manhole cover of the sewer collection line, that fixture must be protected from backflow of sewage by installing a backwater valve.

## Do you need an inspection?

The City of Twin Falls Building Department offers an inspection program, where homeowners may request the City's Plumbing Inspector evaluate their home's existing backwater valve to ensure it is working properly, as well as to determine if one is needed. Please contact the Building Department for more information or to schedule an appointment.

## Do you have questions?

**The City of Twin Falls Public Works Department is happy to assist you.**

The City of Twin Falls Public Works Department may be reached at 208-736-2275 or via email at [publicworks@tfid.org](mailto:publicworks@tfid.org). You can also visit our Public Works Department, which is located at 119 South Park Ave. West, Twin Falls, ID 83301.

For billing questions, please contact the Utility Billing Department at 208-735-7250 or via email at [utilitybilling@tfid.org](mailto:utilitybilling@tfid.org). You can also visit the Utility Billing Department at City Hall, which is located at 321 Second Ave. East, Twin Falls, ID 83301.

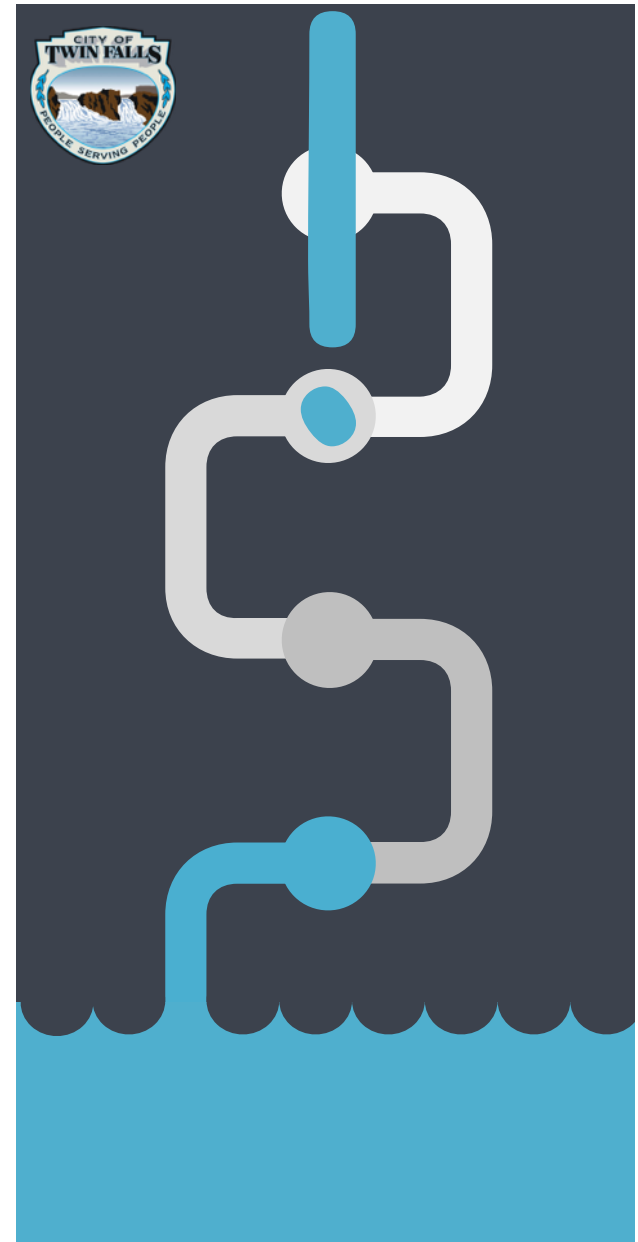
**For more information about backwater prevention, or for more information from the City of Twin Falls, go to [www.tfid.org](http://www.tfid.org)**

You can also find more information from the City of Twin Falls online or on your tablet and mobile devices.



# PROTECTING YOUR HOME FROM SEWER BACKWATER DANGER

[Know how to prevent a sewer backwater disaster](#)



## OTHER CAUSES OF SEWER BACKUP:

- When fat, oil and grease is discharged into a sewer system they will solidify, build up, and plug drain lines in your home. They can also plug sewer lines owned by the City, thus increasing maintenance costs. Plugged sewers can also cause flooding of nearby homes and businesses.
- Solids that are typically washed down drains can build up in the sewer lines and cause backups. Some examples of these solids are dirt, hair, bones, feminine hygiene products, toilet paper, paper towels, kitty litter, broken dishware, garbage, and concrete.
- Small foreign objects can be flushed down toilets or drop down drain holes. These objects can become stuck at a bend in the sewer line. Sewer waste then will stick to the objects, causing backups. Some actual examples of foreign objects found in our sewer lines are toys, balls, scrap wood, cell phones, keys, clothing, diapers, and rocks.
- Tree roots can cause backups. Roots can infiltrate the pipe systems and block the wastewater flow.
- During certain wet weather conditions, sanitary sewers can become overloaded with groundwater or storm water runoff so they become overloaded, resulting in backups or slow running services.
- Significant sags, bellies in the line, cracks, holes, protruding laterals, misaligned pipe, offset and open joints and collapsing pipe material are also possible causes of backups.

## THREE COMMON SCENARIOS

### HOMES LOCATED BELOW THE ELEVATION OF THE UPSTREAM MANHOLE

Any drain opening would be located below the level of the first upstream sewer manhole cover. Therefore, this home should have a backwater valve installed. Homeowners should also be sure to check the backwater device regularly.

### HOMES WITH BASEMENTS LOCATED BELOW THE UPSTREAM MANHOLE

Drains located on the first floor might be safe as it is higher than the first upstream manhole cover. Any drain fixture in the basement would be below the level of the first upstream manhole, and sewage backups could occur without a backwater valve.

### HOMES LOCATED AT AN ELEVATION HIGHER THAN THE UPSTREAM MANHOLE

Should not need a backwater valve because water would drain from the first upstream sanitary sewer manhole, which is lower than the inlet to the drain pipe in this home. This home should not experience a flood due to a sewer backup.

## KNOW YOUR ELEVATION

