

What is Project Dry Basement?

Our sanitary sewer system was built with pipes large enough to hold the sewage that comes from homes and businesses. During periods of heavy rain, rain water is getting into the system and overwhelming it. When the amount of water in the sanitary sewer is more than what the system can hold, sanitary sewers overflow into rivers and backup into basements.

Project Dry Basement is designed to help prevent sanitary sewer backups in single and two-family homes in Columbus. If a home is eligible, the City of Columbus will provide installation of an approved backflow prevention device on the home's sewer line, using the City's certified plumbing contractor.

During the COVID-19 State of Emergency in Columbus, if City staffing restrictions do not allow the installation of an approved backflow prevention device in a timely manner, otherwise eligible home owners may apply for authorization from the city to utilize a licensed plumbing contractor to install an approved backflow prevention device and to be reimbursed for the actual cost of such installation up to an amount of \$2,500 upon submission to the City of the contractor's invoice for the installation cost.

Who is eligible for this program?

A home within the City of Columbus is eligible for PDB if: 1. a sewer backup at the address was first reported to the City, and 2. City staff determine that backup was caused by excess rain water in the sanitary sewers. Meeting this criteria, the City will mail a Program Application to the homeowner.

In order to accurately determine the cause, a backup must be reported to the City within 24 hours of incident.

How do I report a backup in my basement?

If the sanitary sewer backs up into your basement, please report it immediately to the City's Sewer Maintenance by calling 614.645.7102 (24 hours/day), or create a report through the City's 311 Customer Service Center.

What does it cost to participate in the program?

There is no direct cost to the homeowner for basic installation of a backflow prevention device.

However, if the plumbing contractor determines that additional work is required in order to install the device, such as rerouting the service line, the contractor will itemize the additional expenses and discuss these with the homeowner before any work begins. This is so the homeowner can make an informed decision on whether to proceed.

Is this program offered to rental properties?

Yes – if a single or double-family rental property is eligible, the property owner can apply for Project Dry Basement. Rental properties are subject to a plumbing inspection to ensure the health and safety of the residents. For more information on plumbing inspections, please contact Building and Zoning Services – 614.645.6340 or email: plumbinginfo@columbus.gov

What can I expect during installation?

When scheduled, the homeowner must be present to allow access to the basement. The certified plumber who holds the installation contract with the City of Columbus will:

- Cut the floor to access the service line

- Clean out the service line
- Install the backflow prevention device
- Finish the floor
- Add audible alarm to the device

How does a backflow prevention device work?

When water rises in the sewer, a valve closes to prevent backflow into the basement drain. It is automatic and requires no electricity. The alarm will sound whenever the device is in operation – reminding you to limit the amount of water you use. Please read & follow all manufacturers’ instructions with your device.

Who is responsible for maintenance of the device?

The device becomes part of your home sewer line, which homeowners (property owners) are responsible for maintaining. Like any mechanical device, routine maintenance is necessary for reliable operation. The manufacturer’s operating instructions will be provided at the time of installation; our recommendation is to add reminders to your calendar as with other regular home maintenance routines.

Backflow prevention devices (valves) are under warranty and will be replaced if they fail within 1 year of installation.

Will the claims policy remain the same?

Yes, the claims process and policies will be the same.

Will this device help prevent wet basements due to water seeping through walls or windows?

No. This device only prevents sanitary sewer backups through a basement drain.

Does Columbus have a plan to fix the problem of too much rainwater in the sanitary sewers?

The City has implemented Blueprint Columbus to help address basement backups caused by problems in the City’s sanitary sewer lines. You can learn more about the plan and purpose by visiting

Columbus.gov/Blueprint

**Project Dry Basement
Division of Sewerage & Drainage**

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