

Project DRY BASEMENT

Columbus Division of Sewerage and Drainage

What is Project Dry Basement?

Project Dry Basement is a program designed to prevent sewer backups in single and two-family homes in Columbus due to surcharging in city sewers during wet weather or blockages. If a home is eligible, the Department of Public Utilities will provide installation of an approved backflow prevention device on your home sewer line, using an approved plumbing contractor.

What does the program cost to the homeowner?

Nothing. If approved, the city will pay for all labor and materials. The homeowner only needs to be present to provide access for installation. Certain conditions for rental properties apply (see second column).

What backflow device is being used?

The J. R. Smith FloodGate backwater valve or other similar device approved by the city.

How does it work?

By water pressure. When water rises in the sewer a valve closes, preventing backflow into the basement drain. It is automatic and requires no electricity.

Should I limit water usage while the device is in operation?

Yes, which should be the case without the device if you had a backup; the only difference with the device is the absence of sewage in the basement. The owner is responsible for following all instructions from the manufacturer.

Will I be responsible for future maintenance?

Yes. It will become part of your home sewer line, which property owners are responsible for maintaining. Like any mechanical device, routine maintenance may be necessary for reliable operation. The manufacturer's operating instructions will be provided to you at the time of installation.

Who is eligible for the program?

Any Columbus single or two-unit duplex property with at least one backup verified to be related to a city sewer surcharge or blockage that was reported to the Division of Sewerage and Drainage since January 2, 2004, is eligible. Not eligible are: backups caused by

a private property sewer problem, multi-family properties (larger than a two-unit duplex), non-residential properties and those not located in Columbus.

Is the program available for rental properties?

Yes, but the property owner must apply. Rental properties are subject to a health and safety city code inspection for a fee of \$195 per unit.

What if I have not been reporting backups?

The next time a backup occurs, please report it immediately to the 24-hour Sewer Maintenance Operations Center by calling 311 (645-3111 for non-AT&T and cell phones) or 645-7102. If eligibility is determined, an application will be mailed.

Does this program change the Division of Sewerage and Drainage claims policy?

No. The claims process and policies remain the same. The city is under no legal obligation to provide this program, but is offering it as an individual household solution to prevent future basement backups.

Aren't capital improvement projects planned to address the wet weather sewer capacity issues?

Yes. A Wet Weather Management Plan was submitted to the Ohio EPA in 2005 but constructing the improvements will take many years.

Will this program help wet basements due to ground water seeping through walls and windows?

No, it is intended only for sanitary sewer backups that originate through a basement floor drain. Water seepage through a wall or window is a private property drainage issue to be corrected by the owner.

For further questions, please call 645-5590 or email dosd@columbus.gov.

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