



Sanitary Sewer Modified Consent Decree – Appendix E Report

Long term plan report for basement backups

JANUARY 2022

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BACKGROUND

In 2002, Baltimore City entered into a Consent Decree with the Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”) and the Maryland Department of the Environment (“MDE”) to address violations of the Federal Clean Water Act and Sections 9-322 and 9-323 of the Environment Article, Annotated Code of Maryland from discharges of untreated sewage from Baltimore City’s wastewater collection system into the Back River, Patapsco River, the Chesapeake Bay, and other waters of the United States.

Under the 2002 Consent Decree, Baltimore’s Department of Public Works (“DPW”) was required to conduct a thorough investigation of its wastewater collection system and undertake certain systematic and operational improvements to eliminate sanitary sewer overflows (SSO) and achieve compliance with the Clean Water Act and analogous State law.

In 2017, the City entered into a Modified Consent Decree (MCD) with the EPA and MDE that set forth new requirements and deadlines for the City to initiate an Expedited Reimbursement Program to pay residential properties for cleaning and disinfection costs associated with capacity-related building backups. The requirements of the program are set forth in Appendix E of the Modified Consent Decree.

Pursuant to the MCD, the City established a “Building Backup Expedited Reimbursement Program” (the “Program” or “BBERP”) to reimburse City homeowners, renters, non-commercial occupants, and residents for the costs of cleaning up and disinfecting after certain building sewage backups that are the result of surcharging in the collection system caused by wet weather events.

The Program has been in a three-year pilot stage between April 2018 and April 2021. Per Appendix E of the MCD, Baltimore City (The City) “shall evaluate the program and, if needed, recommend changes to improve the efficacy of the program subject to EPA and MDE review and approval. Once approved, the long-term building backup reimbursement program shall continue to be implemented until termination of the Consent Decree.”

In compliance with the above, the City has now prepared this report to describe the overall process of the BBERP, summary of outcomes of the pilot program and recommendations for implementation of the long-term building backup program to be carried out for the remainder of the MCD. Additionally, this report provides description of the Sewage Onsite Support (SOS) Program which was instituted by the City as an alternative means of providing cleaning and disinfection to residents being affected by capacity related wet-weather events.

BBERP OVERVIEW

The BBERP began on April 6, 2018; 6 months after the MCD was entered by the Court. The pilot program provided reimbursement for verified capacity related building backups caused by Wet weather events. Reimbursements were limited to the reasonable costs of cleanup and disinfection of interior spaces in residential (Non-commercial) structures. The City provided written determination in 60 days of receiving all necessary documents. An annual funding of \$2 Million was maintained during the pilot program. All the applications were processed with the eligibility criteria as below:

- Applicant must be a homeowner, tenant, or other residential customer
- The building backup must be the result of surcharging in the sanitary sewer system caused by a wet weather incident
- Applicant must notify the City through 311 within 24-hours of discovery
- An application must be filed with DPW within 90 days of discovery
- Limited to \$2,500 per residence and per backup, for documented out-of-pocket expenses

Although the MCD specifically provides for a twenty-four hour notice requirement, Acting Director on August 11, 2020 announced that the Department of Public Works would be eliminating that requirement during a City Council hearing. Consequently, DPW disregarded the notice requirement when processing reimbursement requests. City has also increased the amount of reimbursement to \$5,000 per dwelling unit per occurrence, the same year.

As the pilot period ended on April 6, 2021, DPW continues to implement the program until the long-term plan recommended in this report is approved by EPA and MDE.

BBERP APPLICATION SUMMARY

Fiscal Year	Amount paid to date	Number of applications received	Number of applications approved
FY 2018	\$4,500.00	14	2
FY 2019	\$10,275.00	61	9
FY 2020	\$1108.43	22	2
FY 2021	\$18,784.00	39	7
FY 2022	\$0	31 (6 applications pending review)	0
Total	\$34,667.43	Average reimbursement	\$1,733.37

Note: A number of applications were denied under BBERP as the basement backups for the submitted events were caused by dry weather events or non-capacity-related wet-weather basement backups. Applications were also rejected if the applications were not submitted within 90 days of the occurrence of the basement backup event. All denied BBERP applications would still have an opportunity to pursue a General liability claim under City Law Department for up to 1 year from the date of the incident/backup.

BBERP OUTREACH EFFORTS

Baltimore City adopted multiple strategies to promote this program among the communities. The Communications team of DPW shares the programs on social media platforms regularly including Facebook, Twitter and NextDoor (Baltimore local). The Communication team of DPW is particularly active in sharing in advance and after a significant wet weather event. Program brochures developed are visible on DPW's website:

<https://publicworks.baltimorecity.gov/sewer-consent-decree/building-backups>

The brochures have been mailed to every resident in Baltimore City essentially reaching 220,000 households. There is also an active phone line, email address and additional information on DPW's website to ensure responsiveness to any questions regarding the programs.

The Community Engagement team averages 15-20 community meetings/forums per week where these programs' attributes are discussed and shared with community leaders, residents and interested stakeholders. Other City agency partners and elected officials have also assisted with dissemination of the brochures in the community since the pandemic has made it difficult for the City employees to campaign door to door educating residents which was being done prior to the pandemic. It is worthy of noting that the team in advance of a wet weather event frequents communities prone to flooding to ensure knowledge of the programs. The City's Office of Emergency Management and the Department of Transportation have been active partners in disseminating brochures and information as well.

The DPW investigators during their investigation for cause of building backup also informs the residents about the program and hands over the brochures when a resident calls 311 to report a building backup.

City has also collected the information on the BBERP application forms on how the resident heard about the program. This has allowed the City to strategize the marketing/outreach efforts. Based on the responses received on the application forms, below is the summary of the survey questions.

Fiscal Year	Number of applications received	How did the applicant hear about the Expedited Reimbursement Program					
		Online/Website	Community meeting	City representative/literature	Social Media	Word of mouth	Other
FY 2018	14	3	0	4	2	3	2
FY 2019	61	10	15	12	14	4	6
FY 2020	22	4	5	3	4	2	4
FY 2021	39	9	2	8	1	6	13
FY 2022	31	5	11	10	0	3	2
Total	167	31	33	37	21	18	27

Based on the above survey data, it can be noted that 73% of the applications were filed by the residents after hearing from the City directly through the outreach strategies adopted by the City as above. The remaining 27% applicants heard about the program through second sources.

SEWAGE ON-SITE SUPPORT (SOS) PROGRAM

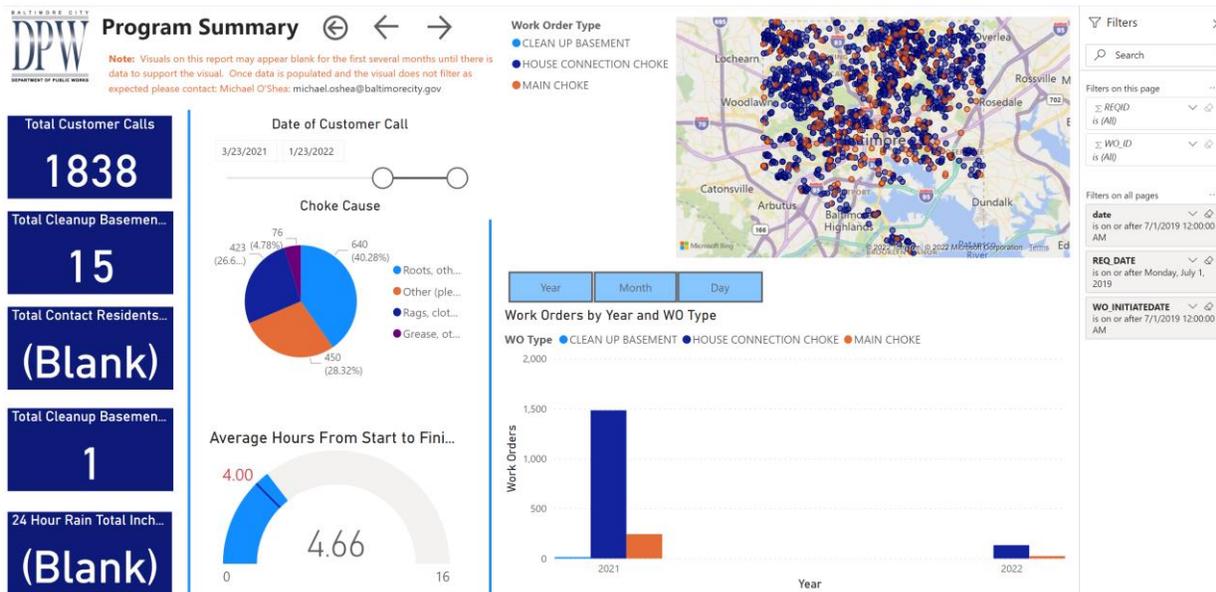
Introduction

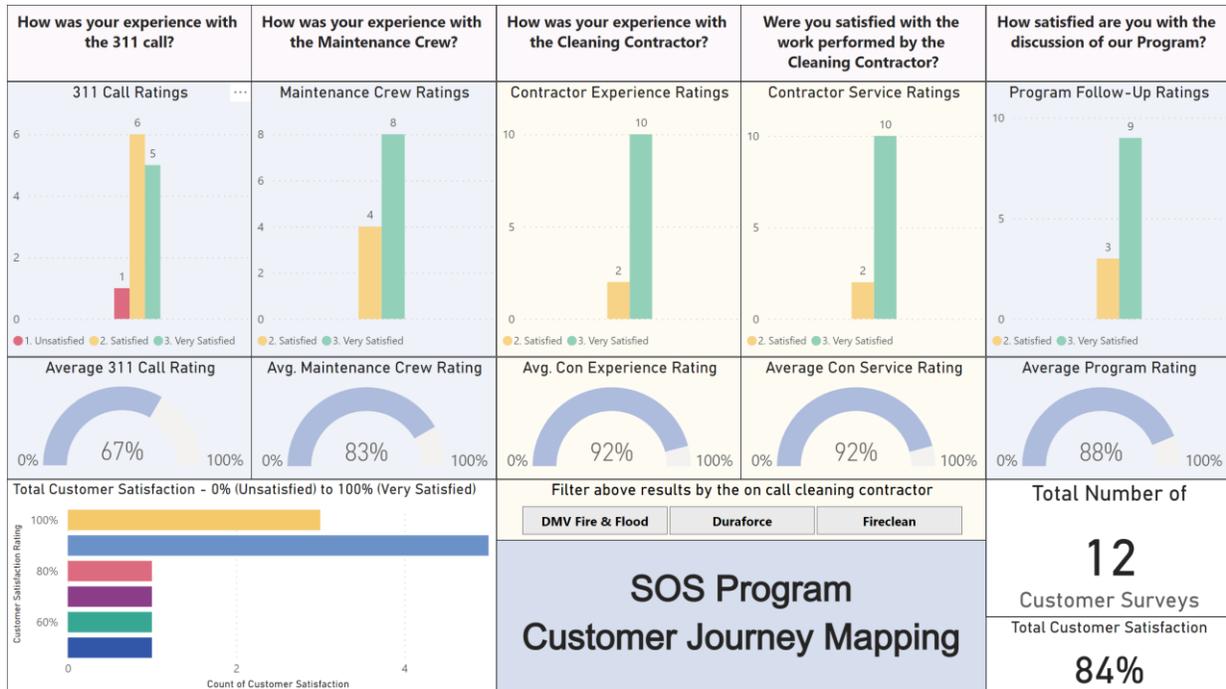
The SOS Program was launched by the Mayor of Baltimore City on March 23, 2021, as a pilot program to assist residents by providing direct cleaning and disinfection services at no cost. To qualify under the SOS program, the residents (homeowner or tenants) must have been impacted by sewage backup caused by a capacity-related wet weather event. The services are provided by 3rd party professional cleaning vendors hired by DPW under this program.

In contrast to the BBERP, the SOS Program provides direct assistance by dispatching professional 3rd party contractors to clean and disinfect the affected property thereby preventing the residents from out-of-pocket expenses for the cleanup. The cleanup service is provided and paid for by the City of Baltimore. To get help with a sewage backup via the SOS Program, a resident must call 311 to report the sewage backup. Once a call is received, DPW will send an inspector to determine the cause of the sewage backup. The inspector will determine whether the sewage backup qualifies for the SOS Program. Upon confirmation of eligibility, cleaning services are offered by DPW. This cleaning services involves disinfection and cleaning, disposal and removal of soiled property, deodorization, dehumidifying, and drying. The SOS program staff independently reviews the rain data and the hydraulic model information to also qualify the resident under the SOS Program. The SOS program qualifications is assessed based on the field inspection and the hydraulic model prediction of the sewer system surcharge. This makes the SOS program more effective and proactive in providing relief through direct assistance for qualified building backup events. Upon determination of program qualifications, the 3rd party

contractors are dispatched within 24 hours for cleaning and sanitizing the interior space and disposing of soiled materials.

The 3rd party contractors are monitored for their efficiency in response time and quality of work performed, which is measured by a process of Customer Journey Mapping (CJM). This CJM process allows the City to monitor the efficiency of the program as well as the quality of work done by the contractors. City has also developed a dashboard which is available to the program managers and the executive staff to track the program status and program efficiency. A Snapshot of the SOS Program dashboards are as below.





SOS Program eligibility criteria:

The eligibility criteria for the SOS program is listed below:

- Applicant must be a homeowner, tenant, or other residential customer.
- The building backup must be the result of wet weather capacity related surcharging in the sanitary sewer system.
- The resident must call 311 as soon as the sewage backup is discovered so the City can dispatch field investigators to determine eligibility

SOS program summary:

Fiscal Year	Timeline	Number of Cleanups offered	Number of Cleanups completed
FY- 21	Mar 2021 – June 2021	17	11
FY-22	July 2021 – November 2021	4	3

Note: An average amount of \$3000 has been spent by the City for cleaning and sanitizing the interior space and disposing the soiled materials per cleanup event under the SOS program.

SOS Program outreach:

Baltimore City adopted multiple strategies to promote this program among the communities. The outreach efforts for the SOS program were similar to the outreach efforts made for the BBERP as stated in above section.

LONG-TERM PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

The BBERP and SOS Program have similar goals but different methods of achieving those goals. While the BBERP has achieved its objective throughout the three (3) year pilot program, the SOS program has achieved the same objectives with the additional benefits of more rapid response time and reduced out-of-pocket costs to residents. Based on the implementation of BBERP and the SOS pilot programs, the City concludes that each program differs in customer use and experience, as detailed below:

- The BBERP and SOS Program have similar scope of providing relief to the residents for wet weather capacity related basement backups. The brochures for both the programs are attached as an appendix (Appendix 1-6) to this report.
- The SOS Program helps promote the health of residents by professionally removing potentially harmful sewage and sewage soiled materials and simplifies matters for the homeowner because the homeowner will not have to contact private insurance and pay a deductible to clean-up sewage backup incidents.
- The SOS program has achieved the same objectives as BBERP with the additional benefits of more rapid response time for sewage cleanup and no out-of-pocket costs to residents for cleaning and sanitizing the interior space and disposing of materials soiled by sewage.
- Since the introduction of the SOS program in 2021, the City has experienced a significant reduction in BBERP applications for qualified events (wet weather capacity related basement backups). This is because all the qualified events were captured under the SOS program due to its proactive implementation strategy.
- Neither the BBERP or SOS programs address property damage expenses and miscellaneous expense claims related to building backups. These must be filed through general liability claims to be processed by the Baltimore City Department of Law. The SOS program reduces the administrative burden for the applicants because the SOS program, in contrast to the BBERP, does not require application forms and documentation.
- The rapid response provided by the SOS program contractors promotes a better quality of life for those unfortunate enough to experience building backups. In addition, the elimination of out-of-pocket expenses by those experience backups promotes equity and eliminates

environmental injustice among communities that cannot afford cleanup services for cleaning the sewer from the interior spaces for qualified events.

- Both programs are funded through wastewater enterprise funds.

Through evaluating the effectiveness of both the programs, the City has determined that the best long-term plan for building backups is to replace the BBERP with the SOS program for its rapid response and effective implementation strategy. The City will continue to allow residents to file other claims through general liability claims process. A copy of the General liability application form is attached as in appendix 7 to the report.

This long-term plan will help the City to utilize the operating funds in a more effective way and meet the same goals of the original BBERP in a more effective manner that yields a better level of service to residents.

NEXT STEPS

Upon approval of the proposed long-term plan the City will take the following next steps:

1. Maintain the \$2 Million budget dedicated to implement the SOS program through the 3rd party cleaning contracts. The City will continually replace or renew these contracts with similar contracts to maintain the continuity of services through the conclusion of the MCD.
2. The City will continue to implement BBERP after approval of the long-term plan, to allow for a reasonable transition period. During this period, the City will promote the long-term building backup SOS program and inform the residents about the transition using the above-mentioned outreach strategy.

3. The City will process all the BBERP applications received through the transition period.
4. The eligibility criteria and the scope for the long-term SOS program will remain the same as the Pilot SOS program.
5. The City will report the progress of the long-term SOS program in the MCD Quarterly Reports.
6. The City will continue to allow the residents to file other claims through Baltimore City's General Liability Claims process.
7. The City will update the Emergency Response Plan required under the Paragraph 16 of the MCD to include the long-term SOS program.

APPENDIX

1. BBERP application form
2. BBERP brochure
3. Handling Sewage backup brochure
4. Prevent Sewer backup brochure
5. SOS program brochure
6. SOS Program FAQ
7. General liability claims form and application procedure

APPLICATION FOR THE SEWAGE BACKUP EXPEDITED REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM



ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Damage was caused by a capacity-related wet weather event (A capacity-related wet weather event occurs when sewer lines surcharge or overflow following at least ¼ inch of recorded precipitation within a 24-hour period).
- Applicant is a City residential customer (i.e., homeowner or tenant).
- Sewage backup event occurred after April 6, 2018.
- Applicant reported incident via 311 or www.baltimorecity.gov/311-services.

Once reported, complete applications with supporting documentation must be received within 90 days of the incident. Applications not received within 90 days may be denied as untimely. No other communication(s) will be considered a request for reimbursement. Applicants may fill out this application electronically or submit a hard copy by mail. Electronic submittal is not required. You must fill out all areas of this application and provide copies of all relevant supporting documentation before your application can be processed.

Supporting Documentation

- Copies of all cleaning and disinfection receipts arising from the sewage backup expenses.
- Tenants: Copy of your lease signed by the property owner of record.
- Owner/Tenant Representative: Proof of power of attorney.

Reimbursement is limited to reasonable, documented expenses for cleanup and disinfection – does not include property damage or related claims. Reimbursement is limited to \$5,000.00 per occurrence.

Claims must be submitted to the Baltimore City Law Department which makes all determinations of liability for claims filed against the City. For information regarding the general liability claims process, please visit the Law Department's website, law.baltimorecity.gov.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR INSURED APPLICANTS

If your property is insured against sewage backups or equivalent events, you must receive a final, written determination from your insurance company before your application can be processed.

You must file this application within 90 days after the incident, but you may provide documentation from your insurance company up to 30 days after receipt from your insurer.

You must include all documentation provided to and received from your insurance company with your application, including proof of any deductible paid. Deductibles may be eligible for reimbursement, provided that the cost(s) incurred are demonstrably linked to cleanup/disinfection.

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM US

Applications will be processed within 60 days after receiving all necessary information and documentation in support of your application. If your application is missing necessary information or supporting documentation you will be notified.

If your application is eligible and all qualifying expenses are documented appropriately, you will receive a release for signature. The release must be signed and received at the address above before your check may be processed.



RETURN TO:

Baltimore City Department of Public Works
Bureau of Water and Wastewater
Abel Wolman Municipal Building
200 Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

OR ATTACH TO EMAIL
reimbursement@baltimorecity.gov

APPLICATION FOR EXPEDITED REIMBURSEMENT OF BUILDING BACKUP

Baltimore City Department of Public Works
Bureau of Water and Wastewater

Abel Wolman Municipal Building
200 Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202
reimbursement@baltimorecity.gov

Eligibility Checklist (if you select "No" to any of the following questions, you may not be eligible for this program)

Have you reported the incident via 311? Yes No Is the affected address residential? Yes No

Are you the owner or tenant of the affected address? Yes No

Was there a wet weather event prior to you finding the damage? Yes No

Did the damage occur after April 6, 2018? Yes No

Applicant's full name: _____

Service Address (including zip code): _____

Note – Service address is the street address of the affected property.

Mailing Address (if different): _____

Home Phone/Business Phone: _____ Email: _____

Date (month, day, year) of incident discovery: _____

Is your dwelling used exclusively as living quarters for a family, and does it contain permanently installed bathroom and kitchen facilities that are reserved for that family? Yes No

Note – If you are a tenant, you must enclose a copy of your lease signed by the owner of record. If you are acting on the owner or tenant's behalf, you must enclose proof of power of attorney.

Total amount requested: _____

Note – Please enclose copies of all supporting documentation (receipts, invoices, photographs, billing statements, etc.) DPW cannot reimburse expenses that are not verified.

Do you have insurance to cover this loss? Yes No

Did you file a claim with your insurance company? Yes No NA

Have you received a final determination from the insurance company? Yes No NA

Note – Please enclose copies of all supporting documentation, including proof of any deductible paid and your insurance company's final determination (if available).

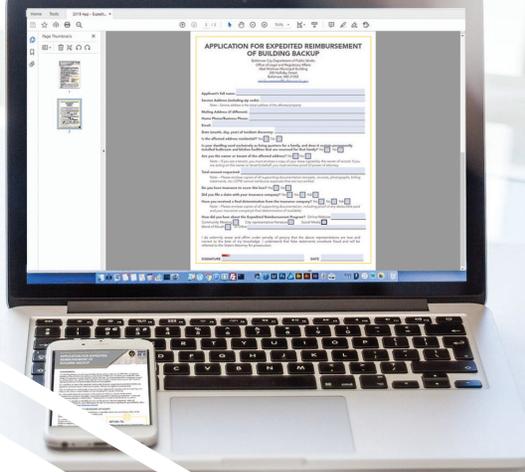
How did you hear about the Expedited Reimbursement Program? Online/Website _____

Community Meeting City representative/literature Social Media Word of Mouth

or Other _____

I do solemnly swear and affirm under penalty of perjury that the above representations are true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I understand that false statements constitute fraud and will be referred to the State's Attorney for prosecution.

SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____



APPLICATION SUBMITTAL

- Contact 311 as soon as possible after discovery of backup.
- Submit a complete application within 90 days of reporting the event.

Email: reimbursement@baltimorecity.gov

Mail: Bureau of Water or Wastewater
200 Holliday Street,
Baltimore MD 21202

- Make copies of all cleaning and disinfection receipts arising from the backup. Keep the originals and submit copies with your application.
- Submit any documentation submitted to and received from your insurance company, including documentation of any deductible paid.

FAILURE TO SUBMIT ALL REQUIRED ITEMS MAY RESULT IN A DELAY OR DENIAL OF YOUR REIMBURSEMENT.

LEGAL

Baltimore City is not liable for unforeseen events, including flood damage or sewage backups. For legal clarification on matters related to a sewage backup or flooding, or to file a claim, please contact the Baltimore City Law Department at 410-396-3400. The Law Department will investigate claims for merit, but filing a claim is NOT a guarantee of reimbursement.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION NOTICE

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's External Civil Rights Compliance Office (ECRCO) is responsible for enforcing several civil rights laws which, together, prohibit discrimination against the public on the basis of race, color, or national origin (including on the basis of limited English proficiency), sex, disability and age by applicants for and recipients of federal financial assistance from EPA. The Baltimore City Department of Public Works (DPW) is a recipient of federal financial assistance. As such, any aid, benefit or service that DPW provides must be administered in a nondiscriminatory manner.

DPW takes all allegations of discrimination seriously. If you feel that you have been discriminated against you may file a complaint of discrimination. Allegations of discrimination based on the components listed above will be investigated by the DPW Office of Equity and Environmental Justice. Complaints must be filed with the Department within 180 days of the alleged discriminatory act.

Please direct all inquiries to:

Baltimore City Department of Public Works
Office of Equity and Environmental Justice
ATTN: Equity Coordinator
200 Holliday Street
Baltimore MD 21202

You may also direct inquiries to 410-396-3310.



BALTIMORE CITY
Department of Public Works

SEWAGE BACKUP EXPEDITED REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM

PUBLICWORKS.BALTIMORECITY.GOV
Call 311 to Report Backups

SEWAGE BACKUP EXPEDITED REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM

The Baltimore City Department of Public Works (DPW) wants to help customers understand sewage backups. A sewage backup occurs when water is pushed up into your home through the pipes from a sanitary sewer or drainage system. Dealing with a sewage backup is one of the most challenging incidents a homeowner or tenant can face.

DPW offers an Expedited Reimbursement Program for sewage backups caused by capacity-related wet weather (rain/snowmelt) events. This program reimburses residential customers for reasonable interior space cleanup and disinfection expenses related to a sewage backup. The maximum reimbursement is \$5,000 per residence, per occurrence.

Determinations for reimbursement must be made by DPW within 60 days of receipt of all submitted documentation.

APPLICATION SUBMITTAL PROCESS

Call
311

Submit
Application

Review
Application

Verify
Eligibility of
Applicant

Verify
Severity of
Event

Determine
Cause of
Backup

Confirm
Accuracy of
Receipts

Issue
Determination



HOW DOES DPW DETERMINE MY REIMBURSEMENT ELIGIBILITY?

Once DPW receives a completed application, the following information is checked:

- Applicant is a verifiable residential customer (homeowners, tenants, other residential).
- Applicant notified the City via 311 and received a Service Request Number (SR #). Applicants are encouraged to notify DPW as soon as possible after discovery to allow expeditious investigation of the backup.
- Applicant submitted the application within 90 days of discovering the damage.
- Building backup resulted from water entering the sanitary sewer system caused by a wet weather event (rain/snowmelt) and no blockage was present.
- Clean-up and disinfection costs were appropriately documented.

HOW DO I GET AN APPLICATION?



Scan this QR code or visit the DPW website to download the application.

publicworks.baltimorecity.gov/sewer-consent-decree/building-backups

- Pick up application in the Lobby of the Abel Wolman Municipal Building - 200 Holliday St. Baltimore MD.
- Call 410-396-3500 and get application mailed to you.

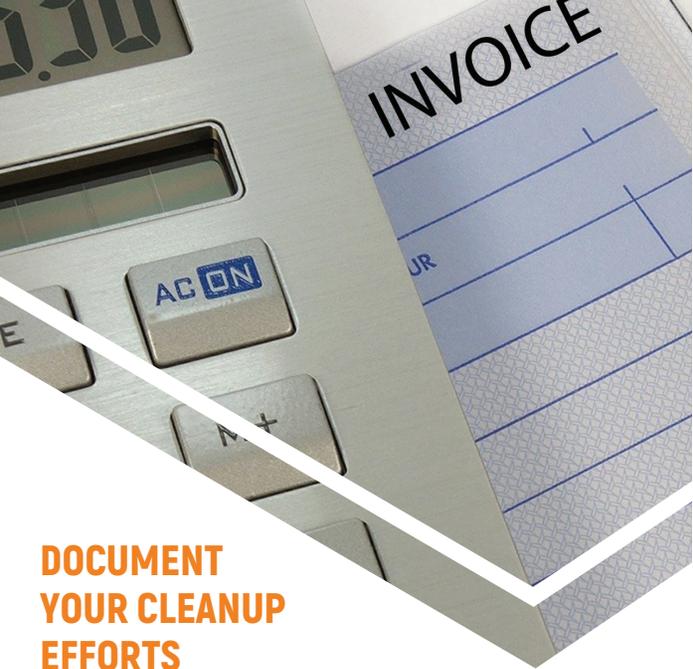
HOW DOES DPW VERIFY THE CAUSE OF THE BACKUP?

- Consult data from various weather sources to determine the severity of the weather event.
- Analyze laterals via an exterior cleanout, if present.
- Look for other reported backups in the area.
- Verify if property is in vulnerable low-lying area.
- Search for historical records of similar backups.
- Look for other potential causes of the damage (overgrown tree roots, cracked pipe, blockage, etc).

HOW DO I VERIFY MY ADDRESS?

You may verify your address with the City using:

- A signed copy of your lease.
- A copy of your water bill in your name.



DOCUMENT YOUR CLEANUP EFFORTS

Document all costs related to the sewage backup. DPW has a Sewage Backup Expedited Reimbursement Program for qualified applicants to receive funds to cover the cost of cleanup and disinfection. To request reimbursement, an applicant must follow the appropriate process required by the City. Document and take pictures of all property damage and the affected area. Documentation is vital to file claims with either the City or your insurance company.

LEGAL

Baltimore City is not liable for unforeseen events, including flood damage or sewage backups. For legal clarification on matters related to a sewage backup or flooding, or to file a claim, please contact the Baltimore City Law Department at 410-396-3400. The Law Department will investigate claims for merit, but filing a claim is NOT a guarantee of reimbursement.

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200 Holliday Street, Baltimore MD 21202

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BALTIMORE CITY
Department of Public Works

HANDLING SEWAGE BACKUPS

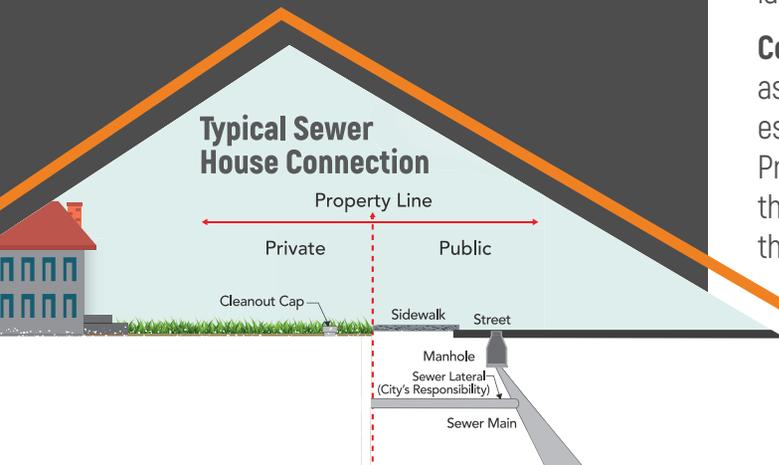
PUBLICWORKS.BALTIMORECITY.GOV
Call 311 to Report Backups

The Baltimore City Department of Public Works (DPW) prepared this brochure to provide customers with step-by-step information on what to do in the event of a sewage backup at their property. This document will guide you through the process – from documentation of the event to the solicitation of a professional to perform the actual cleanup.

TIPS TO AVOID CAUSING BACKUPS

Customers can unwittingly cause backups by placing things in their sinks, toilets, bathtubs, or other drains that clog the sewer system. Additionally, the connection of unapproved devices can have unintended consequences. Follow these tips to reduce additional damage to your system:

- **Do not flush wipes.** Many wipes labeled as “flushable” do not dissolve properly in the sewer system. Instead, these wipes accumulate inside pipes and pump systems, causing back-ups and overflows.
- **Do not connect sump pumps, gutters, roof drainage, and similar drainage systems to the sanitary sewer system without a permit from DPW.** These connections can overwhelm your sewer system during wet weather events.



WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A SEWAGE BACKUP

Prevent Electrocutation: IMMEDIATELY turn off the power if there is standing water or electrical wires near the backup. This is critical as the wires may come into contact with water or soggy materials creating an imminent danger.

Distance Yourself: Keep all children and pets away from the sewage.

Identify Cleanout/Lateral: Confirm the presence of the cleanout or lateral on your property. See graphic below as a guide.

Notify DPW: Call “311” or go to the 311 website www.baltimorecity.gov/311-services.

Protect Yourself: Put on protective eyewear, gloves, and boots to avoid unprotected contact with sewage. Also cover all cuts, scrapes, and open wounds. Immediately wash hands and disinfect any wound that comes into contact with sewage.

TAKE PRECAUTIONS

Limit Exposure. Stop using plumbing and appliances that drain into the sewer system, including sinks, showers, toilets, dishwashers and laundry machines.

Contact A Professional: Contact a plumber to assess the extent of the damage and provide an estimate to complete a comprehensive clean up. Prior to hiring a professional, it is recommended that property owners get estimates from at least three individuals or companies.

SEWAGE CLEANUP

Contamination risks increase the longer sewage remains in contact with building interiors which can lead to other health risks to humans and pets. After the incident, you will need to hire/procure a cleanup professional to restore your property to safe conditions.

WHO SHOULD DO THE CLEANUP?

You may wish to call your insurance provider to determine whether your policy covers sewage backup cleanup. The State of Maryland does not certify cleanup companies. However, the Institute of Inspection Cleaning and Restoration Certification (IICRC) provides education and standards for contractors who perform this work, and you may ask your contractor to follow these guidelines. The IICRC also lists cleanup companies organized by zip code and provides other useful information on its website: www.iicrc.org. You may also call the IICRC at (844) 464-4272. Note: This number is not toll-free.

If the work is not covered by insurance, you may decide to hire a private contractor. Prior to doing so, you may wish to call the Consumer Protection Division of the Maryland Attorney General's Office at (410) 576-6557 or go to their website www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov. Ask if the contractor has a complaint history file.

Be sure to keep copies of any receipts or invoices for your records.



HEALTH RISKS

Raw sewage may contain bacteria, viruses, and other pollutants that can cause disease and contaminate property. Health risk factors to individuals depends on:

1. The amount of sewage that enters the property.
2. The types of germs/contaminants
3. The length of time sewage has been in contact with materials in your home or business.
4. How much contact you came into with the sewage and the duration of your exposure.

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BALTIMORE CITY
Department of Public Works

UNDERSTANDING AND PREVENTING SEWAGE BACKUPS

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Call 311 to Report Backups

The Baltimore City Department of Public Works (DPW) prepared this brochure to provide customers with information regarding sewage backups and how to prevent them.

The term sewage backup describes what happens when water comes up or is pushed into your home through the pipes from sewer or drainage systems. Dealing with a sewage backup is one of the most hazardous and challenging incidents a homeowner can face.

Sewage backups have two primary causes:

- **Pipe blockages or failures.** These problems can be caused by inappropriate disposal of waste like fats/oils/grease (FOG) or wipes/rags/sanitary products. They may also be caused by root intrusion or pipe deterioration.
- **Stormwater and groundwater entering your sewer system during wet weather.** These flows may occur directly (through illegal connections) or indirectly (through cracks and loose joints).



STEPS TO AVOID A SEWAGE BACKUP

- Do not flush grease, rags, disposable diapers, wipes, personal sanitary items, or similar waste.
- Do not plant trees or bushes near sewer lines or laterals. Their roots may grow into the lines and create future blockages.
- Disconnect downspouts and sump pumps from your house connection.
- Hire a licensed plumber to install an exterior cleanout (shown above).
- Consider having a backflow preventer and/or grinder pump installed at your property.

PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY

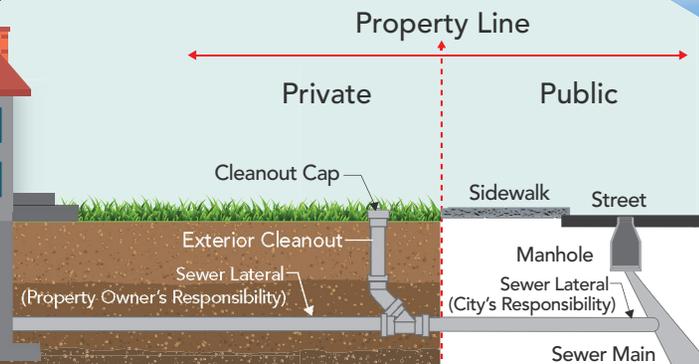
All properties should install an exterior sewer cleanout in accordance with Baltimore City code. An exterior cleanout provides an easy access point to fix your main line sewer issue at ground level.

If a problem occurs in the house connection and an exterior cleanout is not available, you must hire a licensed plumber to assess and resolve the problem.

- Consider purchasing a sewer backup rider for your insurance policy.
- Consider purchasing an extended warranty for your pipes. The City partners with HomeServe USA to offer low cost, extended warranties.

Visit www.homeserveusa.com for more information.

Typical Sewer House Connection



Getting Help with a Sewage Backup

STEP 1

Call 311 or visit the 311 website at 311.baltimorecity.gov to report your sewage backup.

STEP 2

DPW will send an inspector to determine the cause of your sewage backup.

STEP 3

DPW inspector determines the backup is due to a capacity-related wet weather event.

STEP 4

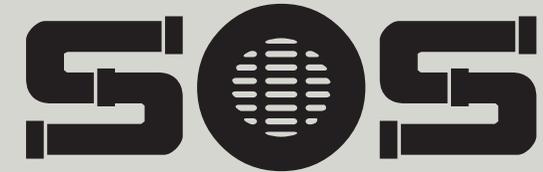
Once cleaning is offered and accepted, the cleaning professionals will schedule a time to provide cleaning services.

Stormwater flooding or sewage backups caused by dry weather events (i.e. grease or debris clogs, root intrusion) are not covered by DPW's SOS Program.

SOS Cleanup Program Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who is eligible for this program?
The SOS Program is available to owners, residents and tenants of property located in Baltimore City impacted by a sewage backup caused by a capacity-related wet weather event.
2. What is a capacity-related wet weather event?
A capacity-related wet weather event occurs when the sewer system is unable to handle the volume of sewage flowing when at least ¼ inch of precipitation is recorded within a 24-hour period.
3. Can this program be used for a flooded basement due to a water main break or stormwater seeping in from outside?
No, this program is designed to support sewer water flooding impacts caused by a wet weather event.
4. How quickly will the cleanup be scheduled and completed after reporting?
Once it has been determined that a wet weather event caused the backup, the inspector will offer to schedule an SOS Program appointment and explain what services are included. The on-call cleaning contractor will contact the resident within approximately one hour of being notified that the customer would like to use the SOS Program. Actual cleaning schedules are dependent upon customer availability for service with the contractors. The contractor offers appointments from 8 a.m. to midnight, seven days a week.
5. Is there a deadline for reporting an issue and getting cleanup services?
Customers are encouraged to contact 311 as soon as the sewage backup is discovered. In the event of an extended period between the backup and the discovery of damage, customers may be able to use DPW's Expedited Reimbursement Program to assist with disinfection and cleanup costs.

DPW's SOS Cleanup Program is a 12-month pilot program.
For more information please visit DPW's website publicworks.baltimorecity.gov/sewer-consent-decree and search for SOS Program.



**SEWAGE ONSITE SUPPORT
CLEANUP PROGRAM**

Professional sewage backup cleaning...
at no cost to you.

**To report a sewage backup,
call 311 or go to
311.baltimorecity.gov**

The Baltimore City Department of Public Works (DPW) is pleased to provide customers with the **Sewage Onsite Support (SOS) Program**. The **SOS Program** will assist with cleanup services in the event of a capacity-related sewage backup at a home or apartment caused by a wet weather event. A wet weather event occurs when at least ¼ inch of precipitation is recorded within a 24-hour period.



Was This A Wet Weather Event?

If there is light rain for 2-3 hours, moderate rain for 30-60 minutes, or heavy rain for 15 minutes, there was likely a wet weather event. You may observe several puddles on the ground that do not disappear easily. Rapid melting of snow could also potentially cause a wet weather event since 10 inches of snow is equivalent to 1 inch of water.

DPW's SOS Program provides cleaning and disinfection services at no cost to the homeowner or tenant. Once the cause of your backup is confirmed to be a wet weather event, DPW will deploy a team of professionals to:

- **Disinfect and Clean:** Eliminate dangerous viruses, bacteria, and other microorganisms from affected areas.
- **Dispose and Remove:** Remove soiled carpet, flooring, furniture and other affected property.
- **Deodorize:** Use professional-grade odor removal equipment, technologies, and processes to tackle unpleasant aromas.
- **Dehumidify and Dry:** Once hazardous materials and excess water have been removed and safely disposed of, completely dry and dehumidify affected areas.

Having professionals thoroughly clean your home protects you from worrisome health risks associated with contacting raw sewage. DPW's SOS Program can help you get your life back to normal as soon as possible.

Did You Know?

According to the Insurance Information Institute, many standard homeowner's insurance policies do not cover sewer backup unless specific (rider/endorsement) coverage is added to the policy. As a protective measure, you may wish to contact your insurance provider to determine whether your policy covers sewage backup cleanup.

To help decide if DPW's SOS Program is right for you, consider the following:

- Raw sewage may contain bacteria, viruses, and other pollutants that can cause disease and contaminate property. The SOS program lets the professionals handle the cleanup for you.
- The SOS Program allows you to avoid contacting your private insurance and having to pay the deductible.
- DPW's SOS Program removes the health risk from your property when you need it most.

Health Risks

Sewage can be a mixture of waste from both household and industrial sources. Sharing the same space as sewage, for any duration of time, often means coming in contact with many harmful bacteria and diseases. Sewage can contain E. coli, tetanus and a host of other dangerous bacteria and viruses that can cause severe health symptoms.

DPW's SOS Cleanup Program Services



Take photos to document all affected areas requiring service



Remove and dispose of all affected property (cloth, wood, any porous material)



Disinfect and sanitize exposed affected areas



Deodorize exposed affected areas



Dehumidify and dry exposed affected areas



Take photos to document completion of cleaning services



Remediate mold and mildew on walls, floors, etc.



Restore property (floor, drywall, paint walls, etc.)



Sanitize and restore or replace personal belongings



Other Independent Services

SOS

SEWAGE ONSITE SUPPORT CLEANUP PROGRAM



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. What does this program cover?

As part of the new Sewage Onsite Support (SOS) Program, DPW will clean the area impacted by a wet weather event that led to sewage backup inside reported properties. DPW's SOS Program provides cleaning and disinfection services at no additional cost to the homeowner or tenant.

DPW on-call cleaning contractors will be responsible for:

1. Drying out the affected room(s)
2. Disinfecting and sanitizing the affected area
3. Disposing of and removing soiled carpet, flooring, furniture, and other affected property

2. Who is eligible for this program?

The SOS Cleanup Program is available to owners, residents and tenants of properties located in Baltimore City impacted by a sewage backup caused by a wet weather event.

3. Does this include multi-family residential properties as well as single family residential properties?

Yes, DPW's SOS Cleanup Program is available to both multi-family residential and single-family residential properties owners and tenants in Baltimore City.

4. Can this program be used for a flooded basement due to a water main break?

No, this program is designed to support sewer water flooding impacts, not a water main break.

5. How quickly will the cleanup be scheduled and completed after reporting?

Once the cause has been determined, the inspector will provide information on the SOS Cleanup Program and what it includes. The on-call cleaning contractor will contact the customer within one hour of notification about the affected address. Cleaning schedules are dependent upon customer availability for service as contractors offer cleanup appointments from 8 a.m. to midnight, seven days a week.

6. Is there a statute of limitations for reporting an issue and getting cleanup services?

Customers are encouraged to contact 311 as soon as the sewage water damage is discovered. In the event of an extended period between the backup and its discovery, customers may be able to use

DPW's Expedited Reimbursement Program to seek funds to assist with disinfection and cleanup costs.

7. If my insurance company handles cleanup at my property due to a sewage backup flooding event, can my deductible be reimbursed by DPW?

Yes, if the damage is due to a wet weather event. The customer can apply for the Sewage Backup Expedited Reimbursement Program for reimbursement of the insurance deductible.

8. My commercial property was flooded. Would this program cover cleaning services at my business?

No, this program provides sewage cleanup support for residential properties only.

9. What are the differences between the SOS Cleanup Program, the Expedited Reimbursement Program, and the City Law Department's claims process?

- The Sewage Onsite Support (SOS) Cleanup is a cleaning program offered free to DPW's Baltimore City residential customers who have experienced a sewage backup that is caused by a wet weather event.
- DPW's Expedited Reimbursement Program offers up to \$5,000 per home or apartment, for each event, for reasonable and documented, clean-up and disinfection costs for sewage backups caused by wet weather events.
- The City Law Department is for customers seeking compensation for personal property damage. The Law Department considers claims for replacement and restoration of affected property.

10. What do I do if I am dissatisfied with the service I receive?

Following completion of cleanup services, the cleaning contractor will request a signature on a satisfaction / job completion form. Customers may call 410-396-3500 if they have any concerns.

11. Why was my property flooding not covered under this program?

This program only covers damage caused by capacity-related wet weather events. Sewage backups can also occur on a dry or sunny day if pipes are clogged by a blockage, termed dry weather backups. Blockages to pipes can be caused by tree roots, improper disposal of fats/cooking oil or grease poured down drains, and from flushing items in the toilet that are not easily broken down (i.e. tissues, paper towels, "flushable" wipes, feminine hygiene products, medicines, toilet scrub pads, cigarette butts, or diapers). Stormwater flooding may also occur during heavy rain events and will not be covered under the SOS Program.

12. What can I do if I have a dry weather sewage backup?

Most sewage backups are caused by dry weather events (typically created by an existing blockage). If your backup is not covered by DPW's SOS Program or Expedited Reimbursement Program, you may:

- Contact your insurance provider to determine if your policy covers sewage backup cleanup
- Visit the Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification (IICRC) www.iicrc.org or call **(844) 464-4272** to identify professional cleanup contractors who perform cleanup and restoration services.
- Contact one of the DPW's On-Call Cleaning Contractors and request detailed quotes from the three or more contractors to complete the cleanup and repairs at your property.
- Schedule cleanup and restoration work. Be sure to keep copies of any receipts or invoices for your records



(<http://www.baltimorecity.gov>)

Baltimore City Law Department (/)

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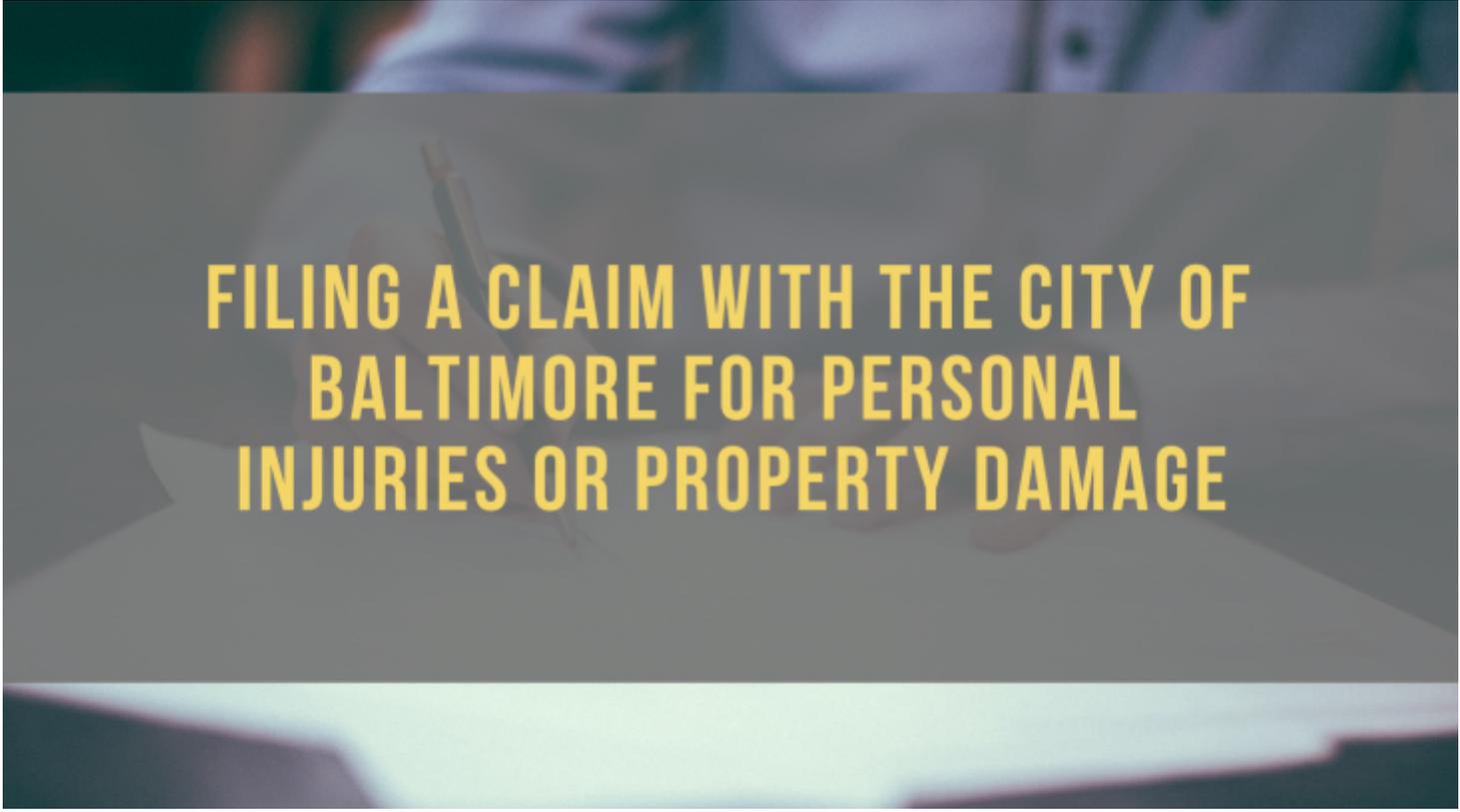
Search



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Claims



**FILING A CLAIM WITH THE CITY OF
BALTIMORE FOR PERSONAL
INJURIES OR PROPERTY DAMAGE**

If you think that the City of Baltimore or one of its employees injured you or your property, you may send us a claim.

- You must send a written claim to the City Law Department.
- You may hand deliver the claim or you may send it by certified mail – return receipt requested.
- You cannot send it by regular mail.
- The City Law Department must receive your claim within 180 days from the date of injuries that occurred prior to October 1, 2015. Claims for injuries after that date must be received by the Law Department within a year of their occurrence.

- You may use the claim form prepared by the Law Department. You can get a copy of the claim form by clicking below. You do not have to use this form.
- **You must include in the claim:**
 - the date of the injury
 - who was involved
 - where it occurred and
 - a brief explanation
- An investigator from the Central Bureau of Investigation in the Law Department will investigate the claim
- When the investigator completes his/her investigation, he/she will advise you of the decision.

The steps listed above are steps you may follow to file a complaint with the Law Department. The Law Department is not giving you legal advice. If you think you need legal advice, you should hire your own attorney.



Scroll down to the bottom of the page for forms related to filing a claim. Once complete, mail to:

Department of Law
CENTRAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
7 E. Redwood Street, 6th Floor
Baltimore, MD 21202

(**Note:** Please download form before filling it out or the information you input will not save)

Related Documents



[General Use Claim Form fillable.pdf](#)

([//law.baltimorecity.gov/sites/default/files/law/attachments/CBI_General_Use_Claim_Form_fillable_0.pdf](http://law.baltimorecity.gov/sites/default/files/law/attachments/CBI_General_Use_Claim_Form_fillable_0.pdf)).



[Claims for Damages Caused By City Owned Vehicles fillable_0.pdf](#)

([//law.baltimorecity.gov/sites/default/files/law/attachments/CBI_Claims_for_Damages_Caused_By_City_Owned_Vehicles_fillable_0.pdf](http://law.baltimorecity.gov/sites/default/files/law/attachments/CBI_Claims_for_Damages_Caused_By_City_Owned_Vehicles_fillable_0.pdf)).



City of Baltimore

City Hall - Room 250

100 N. Holliday St, Baltimore, MD 21202

City Operator: (410) 396-3100

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Contact

Name

Email

Message

//

Send

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Please read the following entirely before completing the attached claim form. This acknowledges your request for a claim form, which is enclosed. You may otherwise choose to file a claim with your insurance carrier.

Return the completed, signed claim form as soon as possible. Include the date, time, and specific location of the incident, the cause of any injury or damages, and the names and addresses of any witnesses or other interested persons. **Submit with your claim form copies of any photographs, bills, receipts, estimates, police reports (or the report number) and other documents in support of your claim. This information may facilitate faster claim processing.**

If you are claiming automobile damage and your vehicle is drivable, send **two repair estimates in addition to the other documents.** If you are claiming bodily injury, send copies of **all medical bills and reports.**

Once your claim form has been received, an investigator will be assigned to your case. The investigator *may* contact you for further information. Upon completion of the investigation, you will be notified of a decision.

Your claim must be received in writing and either hand delivered, mailed or mailed certified, return receipt requested, within one (1) year of the date of incident. **FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION IS NOT ACCEPTABLE.**

It is necessary that you sign and date the claim form where indicated. Notice of claim forms and/or letters not signed will not be processed.

If you have any questions, you may telephone our claims desk between the hours of 8:30 A.M. and 4:30 P.M. at (410) 396-3308 for automobile liability claims or (410) 396-3400 for general liability claims.



MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE

STATEMENT OF CLAIM

DEPARTMENT OF LAW
CENTRAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (CBI)
7 E. Redwood Street, 6th Floor, Baltimore MD 21202
410-396-3400 / 410-396-3308

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Invest: _____
Date: _____
File #: _____

Claimant's full Name: _____
Address (Include postal zone): _____
Email: _____
Home Phone: _____ Cell: _____ Date of Birth: _____
Exact Location of Incident: _____
Date of incident: _____ Time: _____ am pm
The Incident (describe fully)

Property Damaged (describe fully, including photographs)

Do you have Insurance to cover this loss? Yes No Did you file a claim with your Insurance company regarding this loss? Yes No
Name of Insurance company: _____ Policy Number: _____ Effective Dates: _____ to _____
Estimated Damages: (describe fully)

Witnesses Names and Addresses

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

IF ANYONE WAS INJURED, FILL IN BELOW

Name of Injured Party: _____ Address: _____
Name of Injuries: _____
Attending Doctor's Name: _____
If Treated at Hospital, Give Name and Address: _____
Occupation: _____ Employer's Name and Address: _____
Time lost from work? Yes No Specify Dates: _____ Salary: Wkly: _____ Hrly: \$ _____
Was Incident Reported?: Yes No To Whom?: _____ When: _____

I do solemnly swear and affirm under penalty or perjury that the above representations are true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I understand that false statements constitute fraud and will be referred to the State's Attorney for prosecution. I further swear and affirm that I have not been indemnified by an Insurance company for the loss (es) that I now claim.

Claimant's Signature: _____ Dated: _____

