



UMHJSA Newsletter

FALL/WINTER, 2014

This newsletter is published by the Authority to keep its service area customers up-to-date on current and new projects and activities.

Our Board Members are:

Kent Nelson, Chairman
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George Hartman, III, Ass't Secretary
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A Reminder Note: Our Administration Office hours are 7:00 A.M. to 3:30 P.M., Monday through Friday. Payments may be put in the mail slot at other times---no cash, please---checks or money orders only!!

DEALING WITH SEWERS & PREVENTING BACKUPS

A sewer backup can create a stressful and emotional situation for the homeowner/renter. In some cases, it may cause health and safety concerns as well as significant property loss. A proper response to a sewer backup can greatly minimize property damage and diminish the threat of illness.

Upper Moreland-Hatboro Joint Sewer Authority (UMHJSA) makes every effort to be responsive to residents'

needs and concerns when a sewer backup occurs. UMHJSA has a crew whose main duty is to inspect, clean and maintain sewers. Unfortunately, because a sewer is not a closed system, many things that are put into the sewer can clog the system. Large amounts of grease from homes and restaurants, disposable diapers and toilet wipes are common items that cause problems. Another problem is tree roots, which can grow into and obstruct the system.

While UMHJSA prohibits the discharge of any substance likely to cause a sewer obstruction, and we try to educate the public about the problems they cause, there is really no way we can absolutely prevent this from happening. Many factors can cause backups and they are beyond the scope of normal maintenance. Many homeowners' insurance policies exclude damage resulting from sewer backups. However, some insurance companies do provide sewer backup coverage. **If you are concerned about the possibility of a sewer backup and want to assure that you are covered, we urge you to check with your home insurer regarding the availability of sewer backup insurance, and include cleanup costs as well as repairs and replacement.** Courts have determined that local governments are liable only if there is negligent operation of a system. A local government cannot guarantee a public system will not backup. Items such as disposable diapers, toilet wipes and grease that are placed into the system by

residents and businesses can cause unavoidable backups despite regular maintenance and cleaning of lines. If you use your basement for storage of valuable antiques or spend a lot of money refinishing that basement, get that extra insurance! Also, you may want to check with your plumber about installing a backwater valve. It may cost you several hundred dollars but it may save your basement.

EASEMENTS—A sewer easement is an area where the Authority has the right to enter, maintain, repair, inspect, improve, renovate and replace facilities including pipes and manholes and to keep clear access through the easement. The typical sewer easement is 20 feet in width with the sewer line being the center line. Many of the easements are located in off-street areas. In order to assist our field crew with maintenance it is important that homeowners do not landscape over the tops of manholes. Burying manholes makes it difficult for

our field crew to locate and access the lines in the event of an emergency. Also, the Authority prohibits trees being planted within the easement as their roots tend to follow the sewer line and cause backups. The Authority also requires that no structures be placed in the easement such as, sheds, buildings, pools, etc. Be aware that the Authority may need to replace the line and any item placed on the sewer easement must be removed at the sole cost of the property owner. As part of our ongoing maintenance program, if you have a manhole in your yard that is deteriorating, overflows during high rain events, or needs adjustment please take a minute to contact our office at 215-659-4017 so we may correct the problem.

Remember—water is a finite resource. We have all we will ever get. Conserve and use it wisely!

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