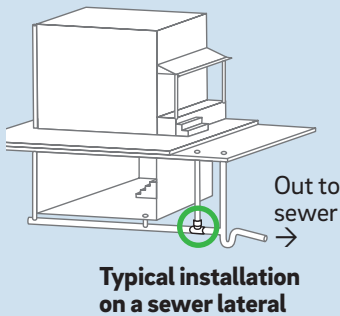


# Basement Backup Protection Program

Free plumbing fixes for basement flooding caused by sewer backups

PHILADELPHIA  
**WATER**  
— DEPARTMENT —

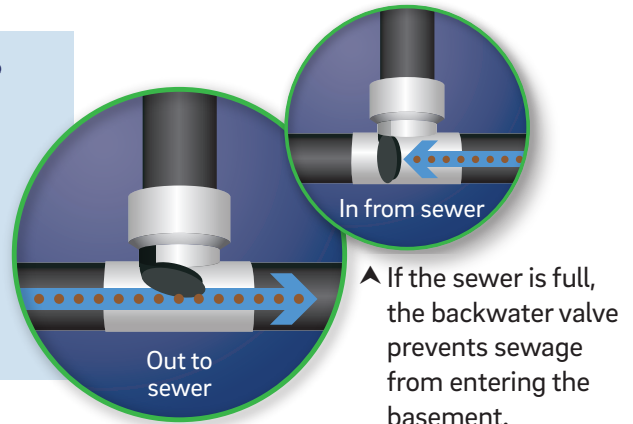
The Basement Backup Protection Program provides **free backwater valve installations** and **downspout modifications** for qualifying customers to prevent sewage backups. Sewage backups occur when water from sewers enters basements through plumbing fixtures like floor drains and toilets.



## What Is a Backwater Valve?

Backwater valves only allow waste water to flow in one direction—out of the house.

In normal conditions, a backwater valve allows waste water from the home to flow into the sewer main.



## How can Downspout Modifications help?

Roof downspouts and yard drains usually flow from the back of a home into the same basement drainage pipe as the indoor plumbing fixtures.

Since this water comes from inside the property, if the local sewer is full, the stormwater from the downspout has nowhere to go. This can force home stormwater mixed with home wastewater up through drains in the basement.

Properly disconnecting a roof downspout and redirecting the home's stormwater to a suitable green area or open space should solve this issue.

## What is required for a home to be eligible?

- ☐ Your property is experiencing water backing up from the City's sewer through connected basement fixtures, toilets or floor drains.
- ☐ You are current on your water bill, or can enter into a payment agreement.
- ☐ Any violations issued by PWD or other City Agencies must be addressed.
- ☐ All plumbing systems related to the installation must be accessible.
- ☐ You must sign our agreement. You'll be responsible for fixing your backflow preventer or downspout if they become damaged.

## OK! How do I participate?

Eligible residents:

- **Complete and submit the attached Basement Backup Protection Program application.**

After inspections are complete and your property lateral is confirmed to be in good working order, PWD will provide you with a proposal for the scope of work and a **Basement Backup Protection Agreement**.

Signing this agreement confirms your willingness to maintain any backwater valves to be installed, and that PWD will pay for all work related to the installation of backwater valves and downspout modifications.

## What to Expect

You submit completed BBPP Application.

Application is accepted by PWD.

Inspector & plumber evaluate your plumbing.

PWD provides scope of work proposal. You sign the Agreement.

PWD pays for installation.

You perform periodic maintenance.

# Basement Backup Protection Program: Frequently Asked Questions

## 1. Why do these sewage backups happen?

The area served by Philadelphia's combined sewers is far more developed and paved over today than when the system was constructed. Rain that once harmlessly soaked into the ground now quickly runs across pavement and into sewers, sometimes filling them beyond capacity.

The excess volume can overflow and back up into plumbing on properties close to sea level. The City has committed billions of dollars toward permanent solutions. We are increasing how much stormwater the sewer system and treatment plants can handle while reducing stormwater volume using green stormwater tools through the *Green City, Clean Waters* program.

These solutions are large, long-term projects that will take years to meet the needs of every resident. The Basement Backup Protection Program helps those experiencing backup issues now.

## 2. Is the City liable for the damages to my property as a result of basement backups and flooding?

No. The City is only responsible for property damage when there is a failure of its infrastructure, e.g., a water main break, a clog in the sewer, etc. Basement backups and other flooding causes are considered the result of extreme natural events such as hurricanes.

## 3. Who maintains the backwater valves installed at my property?

Philadelphia Water Department's plumber provides a one-year warranty for the valves and the installation. However, it is the homeowner's responsibility to maintain the valves. Each participant will receive maintenance guidelines to keep the backwater valves in good condition.

## 4. Will backwater valves address water infiltration from basement walls or floors?

No. Backwater valves will only protect properties from flooding caused by the sewer lateral.

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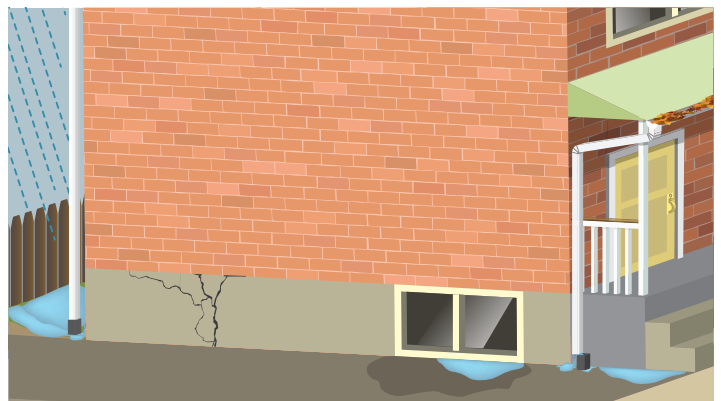
## Other steps you can take to protect your property

► **Avoid storing valuable possessions** such as irreplaceable photo albums, art and important papers in your basement.



► **Flood insurance is strongly recommended.** You can go to [www.floodsmart.gov](http://www.floodsmart.gov) to determine insurance costs to your property and how to obtain flood insurance.

► **Check the drainage on your property** to ensure that yards, walkways or driveways are not directed toward the home. Seepage through walls and floors is the result of groundwater pressure, which occurs when the soil surrounding the basement is saturated with water.



► **Visit the Office of Emergency Management's website** to ensure you're ready for any emergency:  
<http://oem.readyphiladelphia.org/Ready>

► **See more tips for dealing with flooding** in the citywide taskforce's *Guide to Flooding*:  
[phillyh2o.info/flood-guide](http://phillyh2o.info/flood-guide)

# Basement Backup Protection Program: Application

## Customer Information

1. Property Owner:
2. Address:
3. Zip:
4. Daytime Phone:
5. Email:
6. PWD Account Number

## Flooding Information

7. Please list any recent dates your property flooded:

Month	Day	Year
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

8. If you experienced interior ground floor or basement flooding, select entry locations. Please select all that apply.

- ☐ Basement Floor Drain
- ☐ Basement Sink
- ☐ Basement Toilet
- ☐ Basement Shower
- ☐ Basement Heater Condensate Line
- ☐ Basement Floor or Wall
- ☐ Don't Know



**Send completed application.**

**MAIL** PWD Basement Backup  
Protection Program  
1101 Market Street, 6th Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19107

OR

**ATTACH THIS FORM  
TO AN EMAIL** [waterinfo@phila.gov](mailto:waterinfo@phila.gov)

To be eligible for this program, your property must be subject to water from the City's sewer backing up into your basement through basement fixtures, toilets or floor drains that are connected to the City's sewer. All work conducted to eliminate this situation will be done at the City's sole discretion. In addition, you must be the property owner of the affected property and must be current on your water/sewer bill or enter into a payment agreement to become current. When a scope of work has been defined for your property, you will be required to sign the attached Basement Backup Protection Agreement.

All participants in the Basement Backup Protection Program (Program) are required to sign the Basement Backup Protection Agreement (Agreement). By signing the Agreement, the participant agrees and acknowledges that ownership of the basement backflow prevention device (Device) passes entirely to the participant, that the participant is exclusively responsible for the maintenance of the Device, and that the participant releases the City of any liability from damages related to the Device and/or the installation of the Device. The Agreement will also include provisions explaining what the Device is and how it works, limitations on use of the Device during rain events, and maintenance requirements relating to the use of the Device.