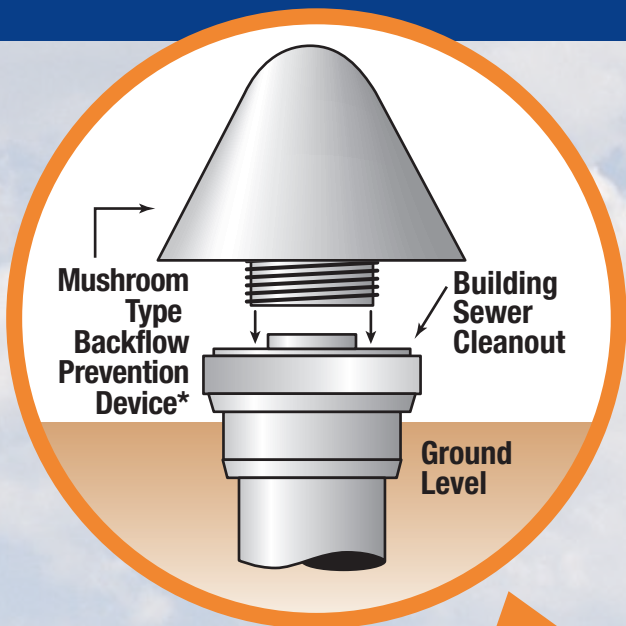
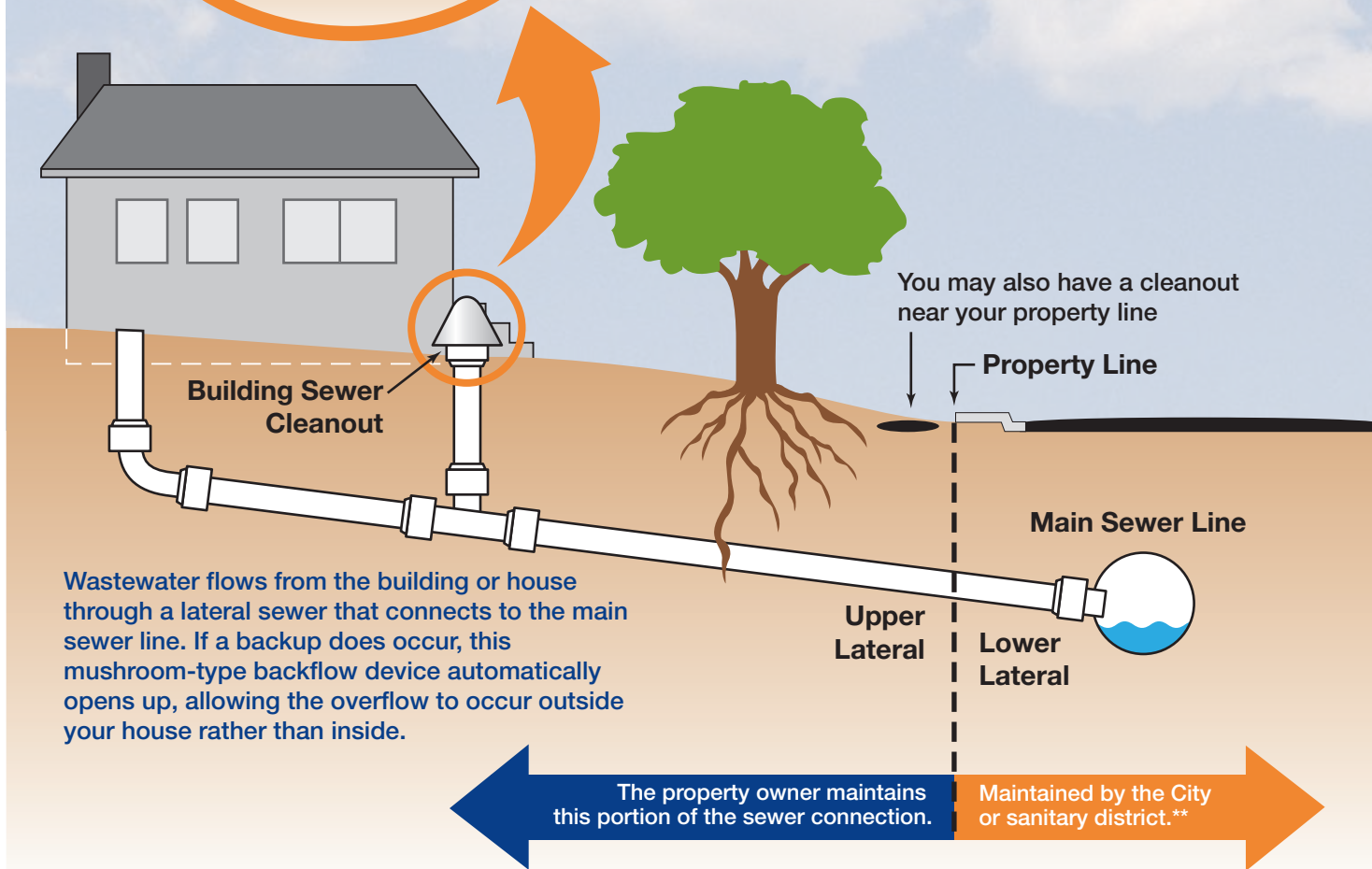


# Be Sewer Smart!

## This Rainy Season



**A Backflow Prevention Device (BPD)** can save you from the very unpleasant and costly experience of a sewage backup into your home.



\* There are other varieties of devices. Visit [www.sewersmart.org](http://www.sewersmart.org).

\*\* Note that the responsibilities may vary in your community. Be sure to check with your local City or sanitary district.

# Protect Your Home from Sewage Backflows



## Wherever a sewer system exists, so does the potential for backflows

Sewer main lines can become blocked due to roots, grease buildup or debris in the pipes. When this occurs, wastewater is stopped by the blockage and then backs up toward the first possible outlet – usually a manhole. However, sometimes the outlet is a fixture or drain inside a home or business. Many backflows are relatively small and can be cleaned up quickly. Left unattended, however, they can result in significant property damage.

When a wastewater backflow occurs, contact your City's Public Works Department or local sanitary district as soon as possible. Their crews locate the blockage and determine if it is in the public portion of the sewer; if it is, the crew removes the blockage.

## Property owners are responsible for internal plumbing and lateral pipes

If a backup occurs within private internal plumbing or in the lateral pipe that connects private property to the public sewer, this is the property owner's responsibility. You should contact a licensed plumbing contractor to make repairs. A permit is usually required for sewer work outside of a building.

## Ordinance requires device that can help to prevent backflows on private property

Most sewer backups are caused by plugged private laterals and can be corrected by the property owner or a plumber. However, some are caused by obstructions in the public sewer main and when this happens, a backflow can occur in a home or business. While this number remains low, the costs associated with clean up and repair are rising.

Installing a Backflow Prevention Device (BPD) is the best way to prevent wastewater from backing up into your home or business, regardless of whether the clog is in the public sewer main or a private lateral. While the types of BPDs vary, they either fit in the lateral or on top of a cleanout. This allows the backflow to occur outside the building rather than through interior fixtures or drains.

Since 1962 sewer cleanouts and BPDs are required when a structure is at risk of backflow. According to the Universal Plumbing Code (UPC), a BPD is required whenever the



Spring-loaded "pop-up" type BPD

lowest drain or fixture on the property is less than one foot above the closest upstream manhole. It is in the property owner's best interests to install one without delay.

Installation of the device is relatively simple, but must be done. Check with your sanitary district for local codes and advice or have one installed by a licensed plumbing contractor. Once installed, the device should be kept accessible and free from obstructions such as dirt or vegetation.

## Protect your property investment

If you do not already have a BPD, we recommend that you install one or have one installed as soon as possible. Most of them can easily be installed by the home owner in a very short period of time. They are available in different models ranging in price from \$5 to \$75 and can be purchased at plumbing supply stores.

For more information, visit our web site at [www.sewersmart.org](http://www.sewersmart.org) or contact your local sanitary district.

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