

CITY of MEBANE

POLICY STATEMENT	
SUBJECT: Sewer Back-Up and Backflow Prevention Policy	PAGE 1 OF 2
	EFFECTIVE: June 14, 2010
	SUPERSEDES: N/A
	PREPARED BY:  Robert L. Wilson, City Manager
	ADOPTED BY COUNCIL: DATE: June 14, 2010

PURPOSE

To establish policies related to sewer back-up issues and backflow prevention.

BACKGROUND

The City of Mebane Public Works Department makes a concerted effort, through an ongoing preventative maintenance program, to keep the 80+ miles of sewer system in good operating condition. Occasionally; however, conditions develop within the sewer system that may cause sewage to back-up into a residence or business. Sewer back-ups can also occur within a private sewer lateral that is not a result of any condition within the city sewer system.

The City is responsible for maintaining sewer mains and manholes which are located in public streets and dedicated sewer easements. Property owners are responsible for maintaining sewer laterals. This policy clarifies the property owner's responsibilities concerning the sewer laterals located on private property and the steps a property owner should take if a sewer back-up occurs.

PROPERTY OWNER'S RESPONSIBILITY

The property owner is responsible for keeping the sewer lateral free from blockages between the building being served and the city sewer line.

If a customer finds a problem with the sewer lateral, the customer should contact Mebane Public Works and request that personnel investigate the cause of the problem. City staff will inspect the city sewer line serving the property to determine if there is a problem with the city line. City staff will assist property owners in locating the problem, advise the property owner on action needed, and correct the problem if it is a City responsibility. It is clearly noted that City staff is not authorized to enter and clear stoppages in the private sewer lateral on private property.

In the event of a sewer back-up, the property owner should immediately contact the Mebane Public Works Department for City staff to determine if there is a blockage in the city maintained sewer line. If

such blockage is found, the city will take corrective action. Sewer back-ups can result in significant costs for clean up and repairs. Property owners should include a rider on their property insurance to cover possible damage caused by sewer back-ups as the city will only pay for damages that can be shown to be caused by negligence on the part of the city. Any claims for damages caused by a sewer back-up due to a blockage in the city sewer will need to be submitted to the Public Works Director. It is also noted that the City will not pay for any plumbers cost to evaluate or correct a sewer backup unless authorized in advance by the Public Works Department.

Sewer back-ups typically occur in buildings where the finish floor is lower or at street grade. All property owners that have buildings under these conditions should consult with an experienced plumber to determine if a backflow prevention device is required by the State Plumbing Code. It is possible that older homes built before the Plumbing Code was established may not be supplied with such device. It is the property owner's responsibility to determine if such backflow prevention device is required and to install such device. Should a sewer back-up occur within a building where a backflow prevention device is required by the State Plumbing Code, and such is not provided, the City will not participate in the payment of any damages resulting from a sewer back-up. The backflow prevention device, if properly installed and maintained, can prevent sewer from backing up into a residence or business plumbing. The installation and maintenance of the backflow prevention device is the customer's responsibility and at the customer's expense.

BACKFLOW PREVENTION

The City of Mebane is committed to reducing the incidence of sewer back-ups into residences and businesses. Effective for all new permits issued after the date of this policy, new sewer laterals to all buildings shall include sewer backflow prevention devices as follows:

- A. For buildings with finish floor elevation at or lower than the elevation of the upstream sewer manhole, provide an approved sewer backflow valve as required by the State Plumbing Code. The plans for all new construction shall include actual elevations to verify whether this device, or the devices in B. and C. below are needed.
- B. For all other buildings, provide a 4" minimum sewer pop up valve in a sewer cleanout located on the building drain line within 10 ft. from the building exterior wall. Such pop up valve shall be protected from possible damages and the top shall be a minimum of 6" below finish floor elevation.
- C. For all buildings using individual grinder pump stations, provide a 4" minimum sewer pop up valve in a sewer cleanout located on the building drain line within 10 ft. from the building exterior wall. Such pop up valve shall be protected from possible damages and the top shall be a minimum of 6" below finish floor elevation.
- D. Upon a change in the responsible person of any water or sewer account after the effective date this policy, said building related to such account shall be provided with backflow prevention devices in accordance with paragraphs A., B., or C. above prior to initiation of service. The Public Works Department shall verify such backflow prevention devices are installed prior to initiation of service.