

Clean Water Plant • 21 South Elm Street • Zeeland, Michigan 49464 • (616) 772-0873 • FAX (616) 772-5366

Sewer Back-up

In case of an emergency sewer back-up, please call 616-772-0873.

After Business hours, please call 616-772-2001.

If you have experienced a sewer back-up and believe the City of Zeeland is responsible, then you are required under Michigan Public Act 222 of 2001 to contact the City of Zeeland and/or the Zeeland Clean water Plant. The City is required to send you a claim form, even though the City may not be responsible for your problem. This allows you to provide proper notice to the City of a possible claim for damages as a result of a sewer back-up. The completed form must be mailed to: City of Zeeland, City Clerk's Office, 21 South Elm Street, Zeeland, MI. 49464.

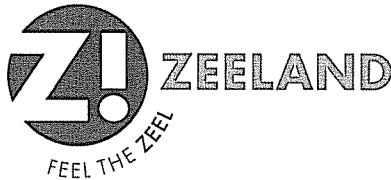
Failure to provide the required notice may prevent recovery of costs.

If you experience an overflow or back-up of a sewage disposal system and you intend to file a claim, your claim must be made in writing within 45 days after the date of damage or physical injury was discovered. The written notice must contain your name, address, telephone number, the address of the affected property, the date of discovery or any property damages or physical injury and a brief description of the claim.

Public Act 170 of 1964, as amended by Public Act 222 of 2001, requires that if you are seeking compensation for personal injury or property damage, then you must show that the sewage disposal system had a defect; that the government agency knew, or reasonably should have known, about the defect; that the defect was not remedied by the government agency in a reasonable amount of time; that the property damage or personal injury resulted because of the defect; AND that you own and have related the value of the damaged personal property.

Act 170 of 1964, as amended is Sections 691.1416 through 691.1619 of the Michigan Compiled Laws (MCL).

Document Section	Description Definitions
691.1416	
Section 691.1417	Damages of physical injuries caused by sewage disposal system event; compliance of claimant and government agency with relief provisions



Clean Water Plant • 21 South Elm Street • Zeeland, Michigan 49464 • (616) 772-0873 • FAX (616) 772-5366

Section Economic damages; grounds for non-economic damages; available
691.1418 defenses

Section Notice of claim; requirements
691.1419

Why did sewage back-up into my house?

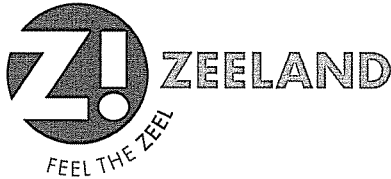
The vast majority of sewer back-ups occur in older sections of the City sanitary sewer system that was constructed with clay pipe prior to 1960. Clay tile is a very hard material that is also very brittle. Over time shifting of the ground can cause joints to partially separate and cracks in the pipe. This allows tree roots in search of water during dry periods to enter the sewer main. These roots continue to grow which restrict the flow of wastewater through the sewer main and increase the size of the cracks. These roots provide an excellent point for grease and solids to accumulate which eventually causes a blockage.

City maintenance crews clean the sewer mains and cut roots on a regular basis. However, customer service lines (laterals) that are also constructed of clay tile have the same root growth issue. These lines are the responsibility of the customer. The City continues to identify, fund and rehabilitate or replace the public sewer mains throughout the City.

It is important for all customers to control what goes into the sewer. Sewers are designed to carry away used water and human wastes. **They are not designed to be garbage disposals.** The Zeeland Clean Water Plant recommends placing disposable wipes in the garbage, and not in the toilet. **Even most products labeled as “flushable” are not recommended to be sent down the sewer because too many wipes flushed at once can cause problems in private sewer services or sewage lift stations.** Flushable wipes could take years to break down in the system.

Please do not put excessive food wastes, grease, rag/towels or any automotive products down the sewer drains. Flammable materials can cause explosions if gases travel through the sewer pipes to an open floor drain near a pilot light such as the one on your hot water heater or furnace. Keep all drain traps filled with water to prevent sewer gases from entering a building.

Another common reason for sewer back-ups is excessive wet weather water entering the sewer system which takes up pipe capacity and backs up customers in lower elevations. While the City is actively working to reduce the amount of ground water that can enter into sewer pipes and manholes, customers must be aware of illegal connections made to



Clean Water Plant • 21 South Elm Street • Zeeland, Michigan 49464 • (616) 772-0873 • FAX (616) 772-5366

the sanitary sewers that are designed to remove foundation water. Sump pumps, foundation drains and downspout connections are explicitly prohibited by plumbing codes and the City Wastewater Control Ordinance. These sources of water into the sanitary sewer system only make yours and your neighbor's situation worse during rain events.

If you have experienced frequent back-ups, you may want to consider installing a floor drain plug. If the floor drain is needed for a wash basin or wash machine a riser on the floor drain can be installed. If the first two solution cannot be used a backwater valve can be installed on your sewer lateral to prevent sewage from entering your home or business from the public sewer main.

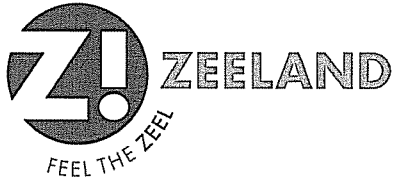
Sanitary Sewer Service

Your sewer service (lateral) between the house and the public sewer main in the street may need to be repaired or replaced. This is the customer's responsibility. We recommend contacting the Zeeland Clean Water Plant at 616-772-0873 for any information about your private sewer service. We keep records on most sanitary sewer services in our system. We recommend having your sewer service scoped with a camera to determine the extent of the repairs necessary to your sewer service. Many licensed plumbers provide this service. If you decide to replace our sewer service you should hire a licensed plumber to perform the work and get price quotes from multiple contractors. A plumbing permit from the City Services and Infrastructure Department is required to repair or replace your sewer service.

Back-up Do's and Don'ts

Do's

- Locate and keep accessible the sewer cleanout. If you do not have a cleanout, have one installed by a plumber. The cleanout is the home owner's responsibility.
- Check your home owner's insurance policy. If you are not covered for back-ups., call your agent for information on costs and coverage options. Most insurance companies offer a rider for water damage or failure of a sump pump. If you experience a back-up, save all receipts related to any repair, cleaning or damages. Take a lot of pictures with descriptions of where the damage occurred.



Clean Water Plant • 21 South Elm Street • Zeeland, Michigan 49464 • (616) 772-0873 • FAX (616) 772-5366

Don'ts

- Put diapers, sanitary napkins or condoms in the toilet.
- Dispose of grease down the drain.
- Plant trees near sewer lines.
- Connect clean water drains or sump pumps to the sanitary sewer system.