



# Actions for Flood Resilient Homes: Sanitary Backflow Prevention Devices

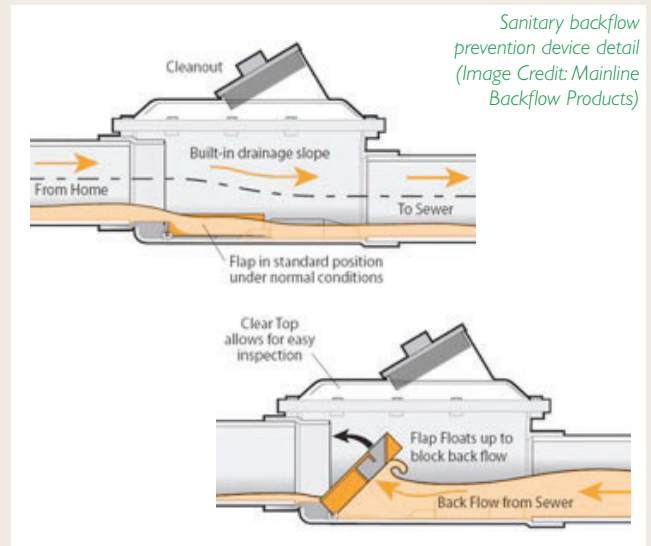
## What is a sanitary backflow prevention device/ backflow valve?

A sanitary backflow prevention device is a valve attached to your plumbing system. It is designed to prevent overflow waste water from the City's sewer system from backing up into your home.

## Who needs a sanitary backflow prevention device?

Because sanitary backflow prevention devices can prevent the significant damage caused by sewer backup, the City of Edina recommends them for all homes. If you have a newer home a valve may have been installed during construction. Backflow valves are usually located in the floor; if you have a sump pump the valve is likely to be close by.

*Note that many insurance companies offer discounts to homeowners who install sanitary backflow prevention devices. The City recommends that backflow prevention devices be installed by a licensed plumber. A permit is required for this installation.*



✓ Before flood action

✗ During flood action

✗ After flood action

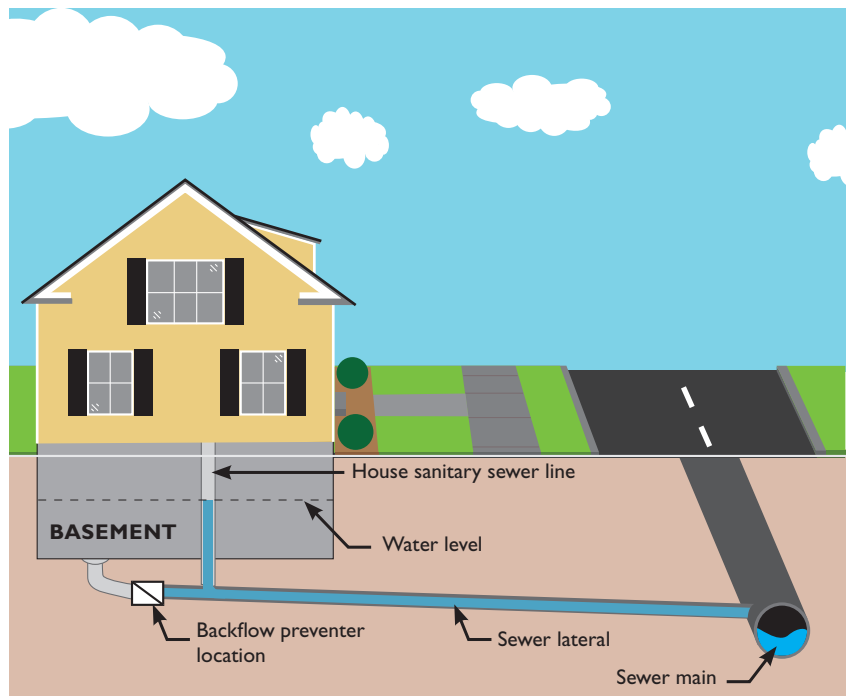
## How do sanitary backflow prevention devices work?

A backflow valve has a flap with small floaters on both sides that allow the flap to open and close. Under normal conditions, the flap is open—allowing water from your home to flow into the main sewer system. However, if a large storm or snowmelt overwhelms the sewer system, causing water or sewage to backflow toward the house, the floaters will close the flap, effectively shutting your home off from the street sewer system (see detail above). Once the street sewer system has a chance to drain and return to normal functioning, the flap opens again to discharge waste water. Due to the potential for clogging, annual inspection of the device is needed.

**COST: \$135-\$1,000<sup>1</sup>**

✗ Reduces exposure

✓ Reduces vulnerability



Sanitary backflow prevention devices overview

For more information on flood resilience, contact the Engineering Department at 952-826-0371.

<sup>1</sup>According to HomeAdvisor (2020). Costs to install a backflow preventer (including device) depend on the size and type of system. Note that many insurance companies offer discounts to homeowners who install sanitary backflow prevention devices.



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### Other considerations

- You should have your backflow prevention device cleaned and checked annually, preferably by the licensed plumber who installed it.
- To avoid backflow in your home plumbing system, keep your plumbing free of materials such as diapers, sanitary napkins, and cigarette butts.
- Backwater from a public sewer system is hazardous to your health. If sewer water enters your home, you should hire a licensed and trained professional cleaning service.



Sanitary backflow preventer installation



(Top) Image of sewer backup in bathroom, courtesy of <https://blueskyplumbingfl.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/sewer-backup-in-bathroom.jpg>

(Right) Sanitary backflow prevention device install; image courtesy of <https://www.flickr.com/photos/69302634@N02/116327005228/in/photostream/>



### Make sure you're ready for sewer backups ...

Backflow prevention devices can function automatically or be operated manually. To protect your home, the valve must be closed during overload periods—which will vary with the size of the storm, but typically last from 2 to 6 hours. Be aware that during the time the valve is closed you will not be able to use your plumbing.