

**Livingston County**  
**Department of Public Works**  
2300 E. Grand River, Suite 105 • Howell Michigan 48843  
517-546-0040 • Fax: 517-545-9658

Dear Resident,

The Livingston County Department of Public Works regrets that you have experienced a sewage disposal system event. We strongly urge you to check with your homeowner's insurance policy to see if coverage is provided.

It is the property owner's responsibility to use reasonable precautions to preserve and protect the damaged property and take all necessary steps to reduce further damage. If you feel a health hazard exists, enclosed is written material to use as a guide in dealing with certain items.

Current Michigan Law Public Act 170 of 1964, as amended by Public Act 222 of 2001, requires that persons seeking compensation for personal injury or property damage must show that all of the following existed at the time of the event:

- Livingston County at the time of the event owned or operated, or directly or indirectly discharged into, the portion of the sewage disposal system that allegedly caused damage or injury.
- The sewage disposal system of Livingston County had a construction, design, maintenance, operation, or repair defect.
- Livingston County knew, or in the exercise of reasonable diligence should have known, about the defect and failed to take reasonable steps in a reasonable amount of time to repair, correct or remedy the defect.
- The defect must be 50% or more of the cause of the event and the damage or injury.

You are also required to comply with the written notice requirements of Public Act 222. Any claim you make must be submitted in writing within 45 days after the date the damage or physical injury was discovered or should have been discovered. The written notice must contain your full name, address, telephone number, the address of the affected property, the date of discovery of any property damage or physical injury, and a brief description of the claim. Please print and complete the claim form and include when reporting your claim. Claim forms are available on our website: [www.livgov.com/drain](http://www.livgov.com/drain). Filing a claim does not guarantee payment will be forthcoming. Claims are evaluated on an individual basis.

Livingston County field representatives or employees are not permitted to authorize repairs, clean-up or replacement of damaged items. All authorizations must be made by the designated officials of Livingston County following evaluation of a claim. For questions regarding this information, please contact our office at (517) 546-0040.

Sincerely,  
Michelle LaRose  
Deputy Drain Commissioner

# Cleaning Up After a Sewage Back-Up Event

## What is the greatest danger in a flood or sewage back-up?

The greatest danger is not the risk of disease, but the risk of electrocution or explosion. **Do not** enter a flooded basement or light matches until the utility companies have shut off the gas and electric service. If flood waters or sewage fill your basement, you *must* clean properly to prevent you and your family from becoming sick or injured. **Do not bring children into the flooded area during clean-up!** If you experience a sewer backup, it is recommended that a professionally trained restoration firm be utilized. If it is a small event and you prefer to do the work yourself, the following are suggestions on how to clean up a flood or sewage problem.

## Utilities

The following guidelines should be followed when entering a flooded area with gas and/or electricity present:

1. Have the utility companies shut off the gas and electricity.
2. **Do not** touch the fuse box or any plugged in cords or appliances until the electricity is shut off.
3. If an electrical appliance motor or its controls are submerged under water, **do not** start it until consulting with the dealer or service company.
4. **Do not** relight appliances until checked by the gas company. Make sure all pilot lights are on before relighting burners.
5. **Do not** light matches until the gas is turned off. If there is a gas leak, it could cause an explosion.

## Cleaning and Sanitizing

1. Wear protective clothing such as rubber boots, eye protection, and gloves.
2. Drain all flood waters and/or sewage by natural draining or pumping.
3. Remove dirt, soil and debris from surfaces that came in contact with flood waters.
4. Wash down all walls, floors and surfaces that the flood water or sewage touched with clean, warm or hot water and a low suds detergent.
5. Rinse again with warm or hot water.
6. Sanitize by rinsing walls, floors and surfaces using one of the following mixtures: o 2½ tablespoons (tbs) of Lysol/Pine Sol per gallon of water used, or 8 tablespoons (tbs) of laundry bleach (i.e., Clorox, Roman Cleanser) in each gallon of water used.
7. Air the area by opening windows or using fans.
8. Prevent tracking flood debris and sewage into clean areas.

## Clothing and Bedding

Clothing, carpets, furniture, toys and/or bedding should be discarded unless they are cleaned and disinfected. Movable objects could be put outdoors to be cleaned and dried in the sunlight. Discarded clothing should be placed in a tightly closed container until pick-up or disposal. After clean up, make sure that all clothing and parts of the body that came in contact with the flood waters and sewage are thoroughly washed. Be sure to wash hands immediately afterwards. Persons engaged in cleaning operations should be particularly mindful of their personal hygiene. Contaminated fingers should be kept away from eyes, nose and mouth. Persons are advised against smoking at this time because soiled fingers carry disease germs to the cigarette and then to the mouth. After cleanup, hands should be thoroughly cleaned using a nail brush and a lot of soap.

## Foods

Foods that are contaminated can make you and your family sick. They should be dealt with in the following manner:

1. Destroy and discard *all* contaminated bottled and boxed foods.
2. Canned goods (including home canned jars) may be kept if cleaned thoroughly. To clean containers:
  - o Scrub with soap and water. (Use a brush around the rim of home canned jars.)
  - a. Submerge in chlorinated water for 15 minutes (1 ounce of bleach per gallon of water).
  - b. Air dry to prevent rusting.
3. Food stored in a freezer will keep for 2 days after losing power, if the freezer is full (1 day for a half-full freezer) and not opened.
4. If your freezer cannot be started in a day or two, store food in someone else's freezer.
5. Meat that has ice crystals may safely be re-frozen. If it is only "cool-feeling" it is best to cook it, and then re-freeze it.
6. Food stored in a refrigerator will keep for 4-6 hours after losing power, depending on how warm the room temperature is. **Do not** open the refrigerator unless absolutely necessary. You may add ice to the refrigerator if you know it will be turned on soon.
7. Throw out anything with an unusual color, order, or if a perishable food is above 45° F internally.
8. Place discarded food in a tightly closed container until pick up or disposal.

**Note:** This information was compiled from various state and local health agencies. Please contact your local health agency for further suggestions.