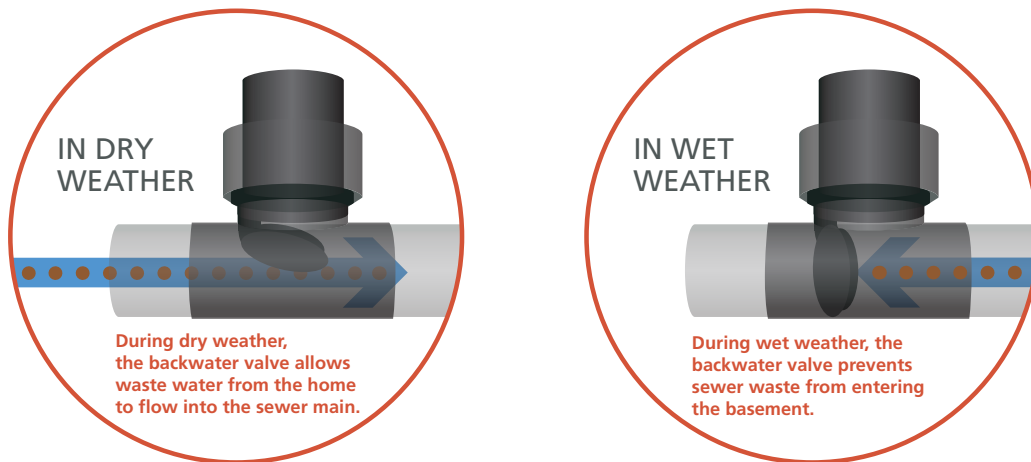


### The PWD Basement Protection Program helps customers defend their properties against sewage back-up caused by intense rain storms.

Philadelphia's combined sewer system was designed to handle both wastewater and stormwater. Since the late 1800s and early 1900s when it was built, the amount of pavement in our city has grown substantially. Rain that used to harmlessly soak into the ground now quickly runs across pavement into the sewer. During intense storms this creates more stormwater volume than our system can handle. The excess volume overflows into the rivers our drinking water comes from, causes substantial flooding as well as property damage.

The city has committed hundreds of millions of dollars toward permanent solutions. Unfortunately, permanent solutions require large, long term projects that may take years to meet the needs of every resident. So we created the **Basement Protection Program** to serve our customers who need help right now. This Program provides eligible residents with free installation of backwater valves and modifications to downspouts that help prevent sewage back up in their basements.



### Eligibility Requirements:

- The property's water bill must be current. If there is an arrearage, the payment agreement must be current for at least six (6) months.
- Any violations issued by PWD or other City Agencies must be abated prior to participating.
- All plumbing systems must be accessible.
- The property must be subject to water backing up from the City's sewer through connected basement fixtures, toilets or floor drains.
- The resident must be willing to perform basic maintenance on any backwater valves provided by the program

Eligible residents who are interested should fill out the Basement Protection Program application found at [www.phila.gov/water](http://www.phila.gov/water).

If your application is accepted, a PWD inspector and a contracted plumber will be assigned to your property to:

- Inspect your property lateral to ensure that it is in good condition.
- Inspect your basement plumbing to see where backwater valves should be installed.
- Inspect any downspouts to identify opportunities to safely disconnect them and direct rainwater to property green space or gutter.

After inspections are complete and your property lateral is confirmed to be in good working order, the Water Department will provide you with a proposal for the scope of work and a Basement Back-flow Prevention Agreement. Signing this agreement confirms your willingness to maintain any backwater valves to be installed and that PWD will pay for all work related to the installation of backwater valves and downspout modifications.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. Why and how does the sewage back up into my home?

Combined sewers are designed to collect sewage from properties and stormwater runoff from streets and properties. Under normal weather conditions – including rain – the sewer system functions well. But during intense rainstorms when we receive many inches of rain in a very short period of time, the sewers fill quickly to capacity. Although they are designed to overflow in our rivers and streams under extreme weather conditions, when they are full during these conditions, they cannot overflow quickly enough into a waterway and therefore back up into property laterals. If a property has plumbing fixtures in the basement (floor drain, utility sink, toilet), a sewer discharge into a property can occur. That is why the Basement Protection Program is designed to provide protection to the property lateral or plumbing fixture. The installation of a backwater valve (think check valve) will only allow the water to flow in one direction.

### 2. Why do I need to disconnect my downspout?

Your roof gutters and yard drains flow into the same drainage pipe as your indoor plumbing fixtures. Often, these connections are made from the back of the property. This means that if a backwater valve is installed on your drain line in the basement, or on your property lateral in the sidewalk, the stormwater from your home can back into the basement as the lateral is full. Disconnecting the downspout so that it directs roof runoff to a green or open area away from properties will resolve this problem.

### 3. Is the City liable for the damages to my property as a result of basement backups and flooding?

No. The City is only responsible for property damage when there is a failure of its infrastructure, e.g., a water main break, a clog in the sewer, etc. Basement backups and other flooding causes are considered the result of extreme natural events such as hurricanes.

### 4. Who maintains the backwater valves installed at my property?

PWD's plumber provides a one year warranty for the valves and the installation. However, it is the homeowner's responsibility to maintain the valves. This is not hard to do and each participant will receive maintenance guidelines to keep the backwater valves in good condition.

### 5. Will backwater valves address water infiltration from basement walls or floors?

No. Backwater valves will only protect properties from flooding the sewer lateral. Seepage through walls and floors is the result of groundwater pressure, which occurs when the soil surrounding the basement is saturated with water. Property owners should check the overland drainage on their property to ensure that yards, walkways or driveways are not directed toward the home.

### 6. What other steps can I take to protect my property?

Avoid storing valuable possessions such as irreplaceable photo albums, art and important papers in your basement if it is prone to flooding.

Visit the City's Office of Emergency Management's website to ensure that you are ready for any emergency.

Go to: <http://oem.readyphiladelphia.org/Ready>

During flooding events, dangerous and life-threatening hazards may exist so it is very important to recognize these dangers. For example, avoid driving through flooded streets and intersections. To better protect your basement from flooding or to clean up your property after a flood, go to [www.FEMA.org](http://www.FEMA.org) for information.

Flood insurance is strongly recommended. You can go to <http://www.floodsmart.gov/floodsmart/> to determine insurance costs to your property and how to obtain flood insurance.

For more information, please go to: [http://www.phillywatersheds.org/watershed\\_issues/flooding](http://www.phillywatersheds.org/watershed_issues/flooding)

1. Property Owner:

2. Address:

3. Zip:

4. Daytime Phone:

5. Email:

6. PWD Account Number

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

7. My basement flooded on the following dates:

- ☐ August 28, 2013
- ☐ August 13, 2013
- ☐ July 28, 2013
- ☐ July 23, 2013
- ☐ September 1, 2011 (Tropical Storm Lee)
- ☐ August 27, 2011 (Hurricane Irene)
- ☐ August 1, 2010
- ☐ August 2, 2009
- ☐ June 6, 2009
- ☐ August 1, 2006
- ☐ September 28, 2004
- ☐ August 1, 2004

☐ Other:

	/		/	
--	---	--	---	--

Month / Day / Year

8. If you experienced interior ground floor or basement flooding, select entry locations. Please select all that apply.

- ☐ Basement Floor Drain
- ☐ Basement Sink
- ☐ Basement Toilet
- ☐ Basement Shower
- ☐ Basement Heater Condensate Line
- ☐ Basement Floor or Wall
- ☐ Don't Know

### MAIL COMPLETED APPLICATION TO:

**Philadelphia Water Department**  
**Basement Protection Program**  
**1101 Market Street,**  
**3rd Floor ARAMARK Tower**  
**Philadelphia, PA 19107**

To be eligible for this program, your property must be subject to water from the City's sewer backing up into your basement through basement fixtures, toilets or floor drains that are connected to the City's sewer. All work conducted to eliminate this situation will be done at the City's sole discretion. In addition, you must be the property owner of the affected property and must be current on your water/sewer bill or enter into a payment agreement to become current. When a scope of work has been defined for your property, you will be required to sign the attached Basement Backflow Prevention Agreement.

All participants in the Basement Backflow Prevention Program (Program) are required to sign the Basement Backflow Prevention Agreement (Agreement). By signing the Agreement, the participant agrees and acknowledges that ownership of the basement backflow prevention device (Device) passes entirely to the participant, that the participant is exclusively responsible for the maintenance of the Device, and that the participant releases the City of any liability from damages related to the Device and/or the installation of the Device. The Agreement will also include provisions explaining what the Device is and how it works, limitations on use of the Device during rain events, and maintenance requirements relating to the use of the Device.