

CAUTION AND COMMON SENSE REGARDING SEWER BACK-UPS*

Following the passage of Tropical Storm Eta, residents may be experiencing difficulties with your sewage system not functioning properly.

General precautions:

- Do not let children play in flood waters as these waters may be contaminated by sewage.
- Should your home toilets be affected, you should use household water as little as possible to prevent backup of sewage into your home.
- Do not open your sewer clean-out (white plastic screw cap in your yard) and allow sewage onto the ground.
- Do be patient; as the level in the toilet will vary throughout the day.

What should I do if sewage backs up into my home?

- If a sewage backup has occurred in your home, stay out of affected areas and keep children away. If your entire home has been saturated, evacuate the home until all affected areas, including but not limited to carpets, rugs, drywall, and baseboards, have been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.
- If sewage has overflowed in open areas or streets, etc., avoid these areas and especially do not let children play in these areas.

How to clean up sewage contaminated items and sewage spills inside your home:

- Wear protective clothing such as rubber boots and waterproof gloves.
- Clean walls, hard-surfaced floors, and other household surfaces with soap and water and disinfect with a solution of 1/4 cup of bleach in one gallon of water. Once cleanup is complete, dry out affected items to prevent the growth of mold.
- Do not mix ammonia cleansers with bleach as toxic vapors will form.
- Wash all linens and clothing in hot water or dry clean them.
- Discard items that cannot be washed or dry cleaned, such as mattresses, carpeting, wall coverings and upholstered furniture.

Follow proper hygiene procedures to prevent illness:

- Keep hands and fingers away from the nose, mouth, eyes and ears.
- Wash hands with soap and water immediately after cleanup efforts as well as before eating or drinking.
- Keep fingernails short and clean. Use a stiff brush to remove dirt and foreign materials.
- Do not store fresh work clothes with used work clothes.
- Shower as soon as possible after cleaning up sewage or sewage contaminated flood waters.

What to do after a flood and sewage remnants are found on the ground:

- Follow the above precautions and keep children away.
- Gently sprinkle a small amount of granulated chlorine on the area, allow to dry. Use sparingly.
- Always use safety precautions when using granulated chlorine, wear gloves and safety glasses.
- Read the warning label for chlorine manufacturers precautions. KEEP AWAY FROM CHILDREN.

*Taken from the Florida Department of Health, Office of Communications. For more information go to <http://www.floridahealth.gov/newsroom/2017/09/091417-septic.html>