PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 2, 2016

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Cleanup and Claims Help on the Way

CINCINNATI – MSD has received more than 1,800 reports of sewer backups, following a 100-year-plus rain storm that struck the Cincinnati area on August 28. This is the highest volume of reports ever received for a single rain event since our Sewer Backup Response Program (SBU) program was established in 2004. The amount of rainfall was twice the historic record of 2½ inches that was set in 1974.

The worst rain fell on Norwood, St. Bernard and eastern and central parts of Cincinnati, which are all on a combined sewer system that carries both rainwater and sewage in the same pipe.

Many of the sewer backups resulting from this storm were caused by a lack of a capacity in the sewer system. Combined sewers, constructed up until the 1950s, were not designed to handle a 100-year-plus rain event. In some cases, these sewers filled up with stormwater and starting overflowing into streams and rivers and backing up into buildings through floor drains.

“The Metropolitan Sewer District of Greater Cincinnati (MSD) would like to express its concern for those who were impacted by the storm,” said MSD Director Gerald Checco. “Please know that we are committed to helping the community get through this hardship. We are responding to every request as soon as possible, given our available resources. We are working to expedite the investigations, the cleanups and the claims process, all of which have or will be delayed due to the high volume of requests received.”

Investigation and Cleaning Assistance

To date, MSD has investigated about 1,300 of the sewer backup reports, either through field visits or a desk-top analysis. We expect to complete our investigations in the next few days, depending on how many new calls come in. If you have standing sewage/water in your home or you have not heard from MSD in the next day or two, please contact us at 352-4900.
MSD investigates all reports of sewer backups to determine the root cause. If a backup is confirmed as a result of a capacity issue in the public sewer, the property is referred for cleanup assistance at no cost to the homeowner.

Note: Property owners are responsible for backups caused by blockages or failure of their private building sewer.

*If you have been approved for a cleanup, MSD will contact you to schedule the appointment. You cannot schedule your own cleanup online.*

Due to high demand, MSD has contracted with nine additional cleaning firms from around the region.

If you are unable to wait for the MSD cleanup, please hire your own restoration contractor, and you will be reimbursed for reasonable costs, provided the sewer backup was caused by a capacity issue in the public sewer. Please visit the [cleanup procedures page](http://sbu.msdgc.org/sbu/page/filing-a-claim.aspx) on the SBU website for information about what an MSD cleanup entails.

We do not recommend Do It Yourself cleaning – please hire a professional, certified restoration contractor.

**Claims**

MSD will reimburse customers for cleanups conducted by their own restoration contractor and will pay for the reasonable value of any property lost or destroyed and for structural damage to your home caused by the sewer backup, provided it was caused by a capacity issue in the public sewer.

Claims are limited to items within the home, not outside in the yard or in a driveway.

If you have suffered damage to your home or belongings as the result of a sewer backup, please fill out an SBU Claim Form.

You can download the Claim Form from the SBU website by clicking here: [http://sbu.msdgc.org/sbu/page/filing-a-claim.aspx](http://sbu.msdgc.org/sbu/page/filing-a-claim.aspx)

To learn more about the claims process, please visit the SBU website by clicking here: [http://sbu.msdgc.org/sbu/page/report-sewer-backup.aspx](http://sbu.msdgc.org/sbu/page/report-sewer-backup.aspx).

Given the high volume of claims anticipated to be submitted, MSD cannot guarantee a response to claims within 60 days, as noted on the claim form.

MSD is re-directing existing staff to assist with claims.

Claim forms must be mailed in or dropped off to MSD’s Wastewater Collection facility. We cannot accept a claim form that has been faxed or emailed.
**Project Groundwork:**

MSD is working to reduce sewer backups during a typical rain event through Project Groundwork, a multi-year initiative that includes hundreds of sewer improvement and stormwater control projects across Hamilton County. For more information about Project Groundwork, visit [www.projectgroundwork.org](http://www.projectgroundwork.org).

For more information about MSD’s SBU program, including cleanup and damage claims assistance, or to report a sewer backup, visit [sbu.msdgc.org](http://sbu.msdgc.org) or call (513) 352-4900, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

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