



# BUILDING BULLETIN

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## Building Services

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Backwater Valve: Mandatory Installation</b>
<b>Building Bulletin No:</b>	<b>BD.BB.21.21</b>
<b>Date Issued:</b>	January 10, 2013
<b>Date Revised:</b>	June 1, 2021
<b>Reference:</b>	<i>7.4.6.4.(3) Div. B, Ontario Building Code</i>

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### A. Purpose

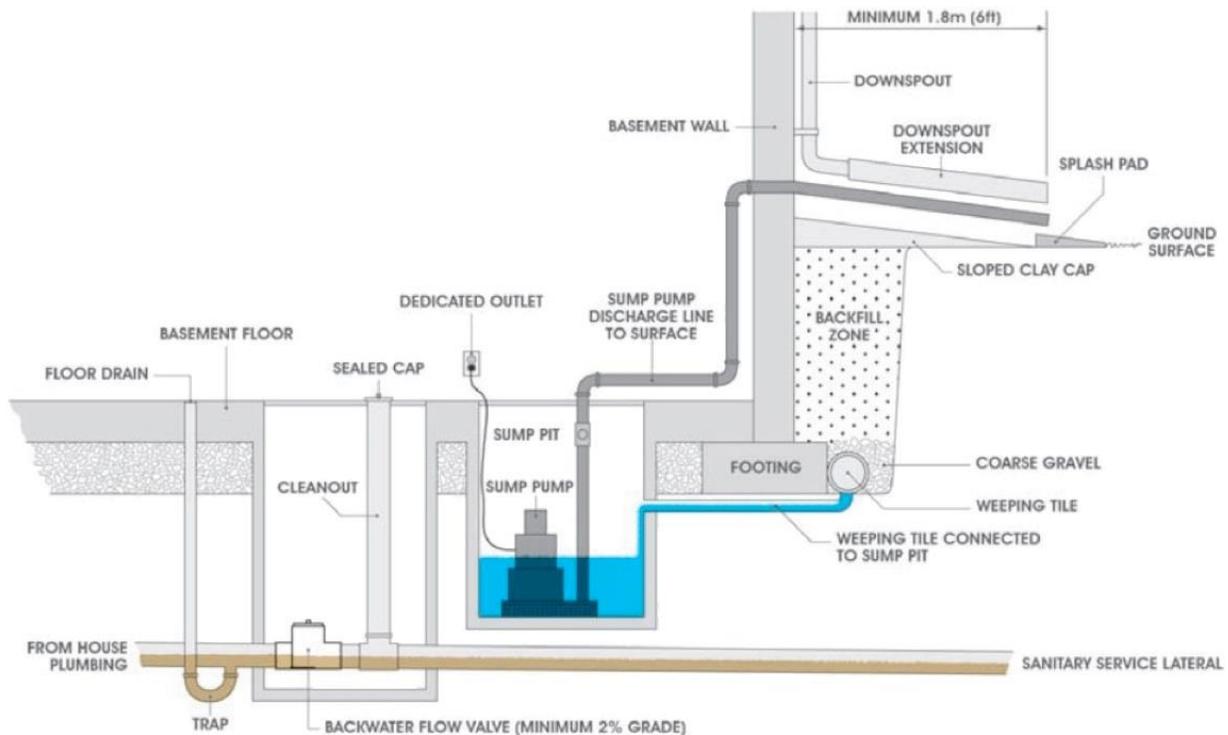
The purpose of this Building Bulletin is to clarify the required installation of a backwater valve for new dwellings.

### B. Background and Definitions

*Backwater valve* (sometimes referred to as a backflow valve): a valve that is placed in the sewer lateral that helps to prevent water from backing up from the municipal sewer into the basement.

Urban flood damages are a growing issue for municipalities, insurers and homeowners across Ontario and Canada with damages from flood events often exceeding \$100s of million dollars a year.

In addition to the financial costs of sewer back water flooding, there are significant health concerns. Sewer backups occur when there are massive amounts of water overloading a drainage system. This results in wastewater (including human waste) flooding into basements. Floods from sewer backup introduces blackmould, bacteria carrying pathogens, and sewage waste into homes creating significant health risks for the building occupants. A significant amount of these losses could be prevented by installing a backwater valve in the building drain.



A backwater sanitary valve installation showing its correct position and disconnected weeping tile (courtesy [ICLR](#))

Normally open backwater valves stay open until a sewer surcharge occurs. An open valve allows sewer gasses to vent properly and are the only type of backwater valve allowed to be installed in sanitary sewer laterals under many provincial building codes. When a sewer surcharge occurs, the sewage pushes the valve closed. When the valve is closed, sewage cannot get in, or out, of a building.

### Ontario Building Code and Related Standards

Sentence 7.4.6.4.(3) of the Ontario Building Code states;

*“where a building drain or a branch may be subject to backflow, a backwater valve shall be installed on every fixture drain connected to them when the fixture is located below the level of the adjoining street”.*

An approved CSA backwater valve may be installed in a building drain provided,

- It is a “normally open” design and
- It does not serve more than one dwelling unit.

## C. General Interpretation and Requirements

**Effective February 1, 2013**, the installation of a building code compliant backwater valve shall be installed for every new dwelling that has a fixture(s) below the adjoining street level. A fixture includes a floor drain.

## D. Reference Information

- *Ontario Building Code*
- *Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction*

## E. Attached

[Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction: Basement Flooding](#)

## F. Review Cycle

This building bulletin will be reviewed annually by the Chief Building Official.

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