

5 Potential Reasons Your Bathroom Smells Like Sewage

A bathroom likely isn't the first place that you associate with rosy smells, but that doesn't mean it should smell bad. If your bathroom smells strongly or frequently of sewage, you may be dealing with a serious issue.

It's important to know that there are many reasons that your bathroom could end up smelling like sewage, and not all of them require a plumber. Identifying the reason behind the smell could help you save yourself and the Landlord a lot of money. That's why we've created this guide that can point you toward the reason for a sewage smell in your bathroom.

- Shower Drain Clogs
- Sewer Backup
- Dry, Dirty, or Broken P-Trap
- Sewer Gas Leak from a Broken Toilet
- Bacteria Growth

1. Shower Drain Clogs

A shower may be the place you get clean, but all the dirt and hair that you leave behind can lead to drain clogs. If left unattended, these drain clogs can become a breeding ground for bacteria and could even eat away at your pipes. Both pipe leaks and bacteria-laden clogs can lead to some pretty unfortunate smells emanating from your shower drain.

The good news is that a clogged shower drain can typically be handled without a plumber. The only time you would need to call a plumber to clear a clog is when it is so stubborn none of the at-home solutions seem to be doing the trick. (See "How to Clear a Shower Drain Clog")

2. Sewer Backup

A sewer backup stinks, literally, but it doesn't always mean a huge issue is at hand. In some cases, after heavy rain, the sewers in your area can become overloaded, leading to sewer gases being physically pushed back into homes. While the smell itself may be vile, the actual potential for damage is fairly low in an instance like this.

However, if the sewer backup is so severe that it actually pushes sewage into your home, you have a real problem on your hands. This can destroy pipes, cause illnesses, and damage your home. To avoid this, it's recommended you let us know so we can contact a plumber.

3. Dry, Dirty, or Broken P-Trap

A P-trap is a U-shaped bend in your shower drain pipe and other pipes in your home. These areas of a pipe use trapped water to prevent sewer gases from flowing back into your home. Sometimes, the P-trap can dry out, which may lead to sewer gases flowing into your house. Thankfully, the solution for this is simple: just run your tap for a few minutes to replenish the water in your P-trap.

If that doesn't solve the issue and a sewage smell persists, chances are your P-trap is broken. In this instance, you need to call us immediately. A broken P-trap can lead to leaks and other problems that could spell major damage to your home.

Finally, P-traps can get dirty, in which case you'll notice a musty smell coming out of the drain rather than the more sulfurous smell of sewage. In this case, you can clear it out by pouring equal parts of baking soda and vinegar down the drain (make sure to pour the baking soda first). After pouring the vinegar, cover the drain for 10–15 minutes and then run your tap. This should clear out any grime caught in the P-trap.

4. Sewer Gas Leak from a Broken Toilet

Sometimes, the wax seal around your toilet can fray, allowing sewer gases to make their way into your bathroom. While it may sound like something that's simple to fix, you actually need to uninstall the entire toilet in order to replace the wax ring. It's recommended that you can us to handle this issue. Doing it on your own could lead to a broken toilet, which may be more costly than you'd imagine.

5. Bacteria Growth

Nasty as it may be, sewers create the perfect environment for bacteria growth. In some cases, this bacteria growth can make its way all the way up to your toilet bowl.

Luckily, the solution to deal with this is fairly simple. To get rid of the bacteria growth, fill your toilet with a dilution of bleach and water then scrub it with a toilet brush. Additionally, you should add some of the bleach mixture to the toilet tank and flush several times. If the bacteria issue persists, don't be afraid to add bleach to your tank a few more times and repeat the process.