



July 21, 2026

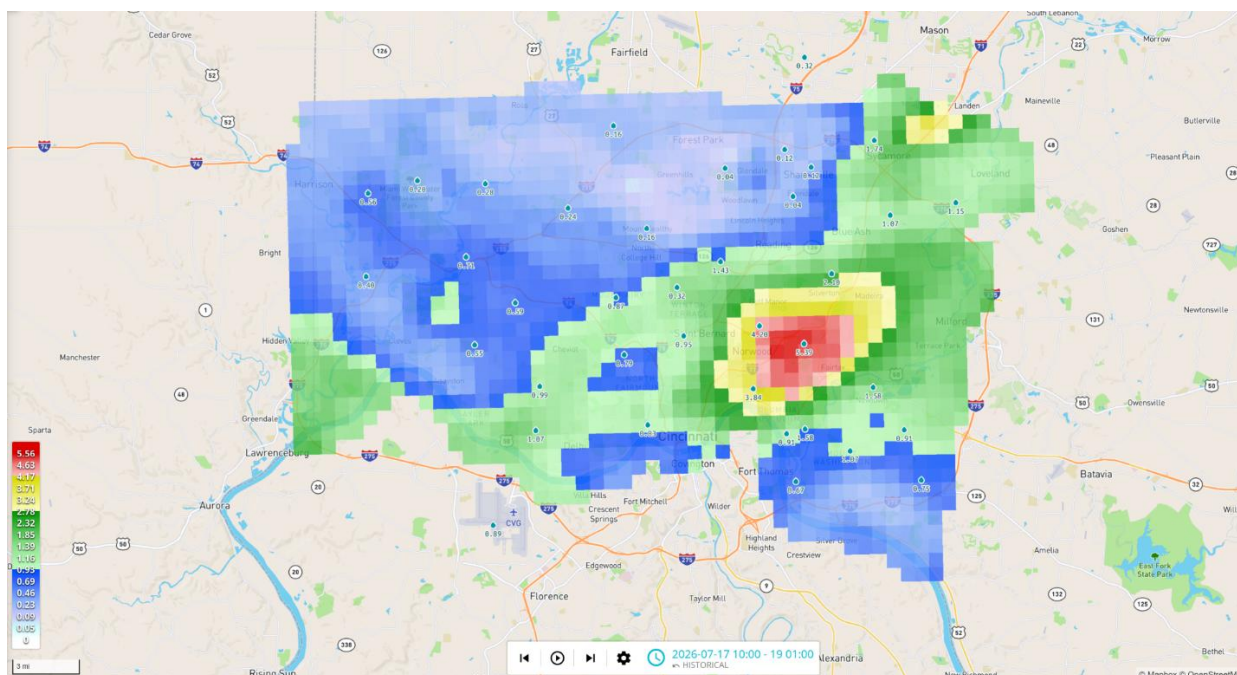
FOR YOUR INFORMATION

To: Mayor and Members of City Council

From: Sheryl M.M. Long, City Manager *SM*

Subject: **July 17, 2026 Flash Flooding and Response**

Greater Cincinnati has faced an unprecedented amount of intense rainstorms in quick succession this summer. On the afternoon of Friday, July 17, the Cincinnati neighborhoods of Oakley, Madisonville, Hyde Park, Pleasant Ridge, Mt. Lookout, along with surrounding communities including Norwood and Fairfax, experienced an extreme storm event. The National Weather Service estimates that this area received between 5-6" of rain over a one-hour period on Friday.



This image illustrates the scale and intensity of the rainfall which has been determined to be a 1,000-year storm. No modern sewer system is designed to handle a storm of this magnitude. This extraordinary rainfall produced widespread flash flooding that was intensified by already saturated ground conditions and the high concentration of roads, buildings, and other paved surfaces in the affected area.

The public sewer system serving the affected Cincinnati neighborhoods consists of two interconnected systems. Storm inlets and storm sewers are operated and maintained by the city's Stormwater Management Utility (SMU). These facilities collect rainfall runoff from streets and other surfaces and convey it to the Metropolitan Sewer District of Greater Cincinnati's (MSD) combined sewer system, which conveys flow to MSD's wastewater treatment plants.

The rainfall on Friday, July 17, was so intense that it far exceeded the design capacity of the public sewer system. Rain fell faster than it could enter storm inlets, causing water to rapidly accumulate on streets and in low-lying areas before it could reach the underground sewer network. This resulted in severe overland flooding that rushed through neighborhoods and into homes and businesses, causing significant damage.

As the storm continued and surface water drained into the sewer system, the extraordinary volume of water also overwhelmed portions of the combined sewer system. In some locations, this caused combined sewer overflows and sewer backups, creating additional impacts beyond the initial destructive flash flooding.

MSD's Sewer Backup Program

Property owners and tenants who have experienced a backup of wastewater from the public sewer into buildings may be eligible for assistance under MSD's Sewer Backup (SBU) Program. Residents should call **513-352-4900** or visit msdgc.org/SBU to report a suspected sewer backup.

MSD has received more than 1,000 reports of sewer backups and flooded basements resulting from the July 17 rainstorm. MSD is dedicating substantial resources to completing investigations and supporting impacted residents, and this effort will take time.

For example, residents who have reported a sewer backup may not see an MSD crew at or near their property for several days. This does not mean their report has been overlooked. Every report is being reviewed, and MSD is systematically conducting field investigations to document conditions and determine what occurred. MSD remains committed to completing a thorough assessment of each reported incident and providing accurate information to impacted residents as response efforts continue.

Because of the large number of reported incidents, MSD advises residents not to wait for an MSD investigation before beginning cleanup of flooded homes or businesses. Prompt cleanup can help reduce additional damage and minimize potential health risks.

Flood Cleanup Resources

Recommendations for safely cleaning and disinfecting flood-damaged property are available in MSD's [Customer Guide](#). Additional flood recovery information is available from the Hamilton County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) [Flood Page](#), including the following recommendations:

- If you have been displaced and need emergency shelter, contact the American Red Cross at **1-800-RED-CROSS (1-800-733-2767)**.
- Contact your insurance provider to determine your coverage.
- Take photographs of flooded areas, structural damage, personal property damage, and any locations where water entered the building.
- Create an inventory of damaged property.

- Dry out your home by opening doors, windows, cabinets, and closets, and use fans and dehumidifiers to reduce moisture.
- Dispose of flood-damaged materials in accordance with your community's waste collection guidelines.
- Thoroughly clean and disinfect all areas affected by floodwater, including floors, walls, shelves, closets, and other surfaces.

Additional information about MSD's Sewer Backup (SBU) Program including eligibility, the investigation process, damage claims, and other frequently asked questions is available at msdgc.org/SBU.

cc: Cathy Bailey, Interim Assistant City Manager
John Brazina, Assistant City Manager
William "Billy" Weber, Assistant City Manager
Diana Christy, Director, Metropolitan Sewer District