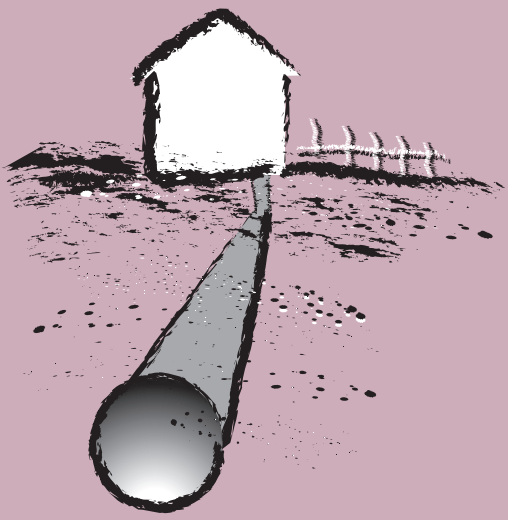
Installing Your Private Sewer Line



ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
CITY OF PORTLAND

working for clean rivers

Getting Started

When you receive notice that sewer is available in your area, your first step in getting connected is to make arrangements to connect your building to the branch at your property line. If you are not sure where your sewer branch is, you can verify the location by calling 503-823-7761.

Finding a Contractor

Plumbers and sewer contractors do most sewer connections, but any general contractor can also do the work. We recommend that you contact several contractors and request free, written bids for the work. Try to get bids from both a plumber and a sewer contractor. They may have different approaches, and there may be a difference in both the cost and convenience to you. Good places to start looking for a contractor:

- Ask your friends and neighbors: Get referrals from your friends and neighbors who have had their sewer connected.
- Contact the Sewer Connection Program at 503-823-4114 for an updated list of contractors.

Other Options

Most property owners choose their own contractor, but other options are available:

- Form a neighborhood co-op: If more than one building in your area needs to connect to the sewer, forming a neighborhood co-op may be an option. By agreeing to use the same contractor and having all jobs done at the same time, neighbors may be able to reduce their overall costs.
- Do-It-Yourself: Few people choose to tackle the sewer connection job themselves because of the nature of the work and the equipment required. Property owners planning to do the work themselves should contact the Bureau of Development Services at 503-823-7300 for information about the plumbing permit process and hours of operation.

  Development Services Center is located at 1900 SW 4th Avenue.

Be an Informed Consumer

All contractors must be registered with the Oregon Construction Contractors Board (CCB). It is illegal for contractors to do sewer connections unless they are registered. Most contractors carry registration cards showing their CCB number and registration expiration date. You can check with the CCB to see if the contractor's license, insurance and bonding are current, and if the contractor has a history of claims or complaints. You can call the CCB in Salem at 503-378-4621 or visit their website at www.ccb.state.or.us. The Contractors Board has a process for homeowners to make complaints or file claims when there is a construction contract dispute.

Each Sewer Connection is Different

Your connection and the cost will not be identical to your neighbors'. Factors include:

- The location of your cesspool, septic system, private sewer lines and your building's plumbing;
- Whether your building has a basement, crawl space or concrete slab;
- Location of landscaping, concrete, other utilities, etc.;
- The depth of your connection (depth of branch at your property line);
- How close your building is to the front and side property lines; and
- Who you choose to do the work.

Researching Potential Contractors

It's a good idea to make a list of questions for the contractor so you can compare bids. Be specific about what you want included in your bid and the quality of work you expect.

Ask how the contractor handles city permits: The permits for a sewer connection typically cost about $500. Most contractors include this cost in their bid, and they get the required permits. Occasionally, contractors will ask you to buy the permits. If the permit is in your name, you may be liable for damages that occur.

The permit fee covers the inspection of the pipe and the connection. The inspection ensures that the job meets city

requirements and codes, but does not guarantee the quality of the finished work or the restoration of your landscape. Make sure you discuss those items and include them in your contract.

Ask each contractor for numbers and expiration dates of the following:

- CCB Registration
- Workers Compensation Policy
- Liability Insurance Policy

Ask for a detailed written bid and a schedule

The bid should clearly state all work the contractor will do, and the price. It should say when the contractor will start and finish the job.

Ask each contractor for two or three references from recent customers

If possible, look at the completed work. Talking to a former customer may not be enough - another customer may be satisfied, but his standards may be different from yours.

Compare

Once you have gathered all your information, it's time to compare bids and choose your contractor. The lowest bid is not necessarily the best bid.

Remember

If you will be connecting to a relatively new public sewer, you may be subject to line, branch, system development or sewer conversion charges. Before you or your contractor can buy permits for the job you must pay or finance these charges. You can pay these charges in full by cash or check, with a city installment loan, or with a deferred loan that requires no payment for five years or longer if you qualify. If you have questions about the financing or assistance available, call the Required Sewer Connection Program at 503-823-4114.

Environmental Services
1120 SW Fifth Avenue
Portland Oregon, 97204

Dan Saltzman, Commissioner

Dean Marriott, Director

The City of Portland make will reasonable accomodation for people with disabilities.
Call 503-823-7740 with such requests.
TTY 503-823-6868
Oregon Relay Service 1-800-735-2900

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BS 1111 Nov 2011

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