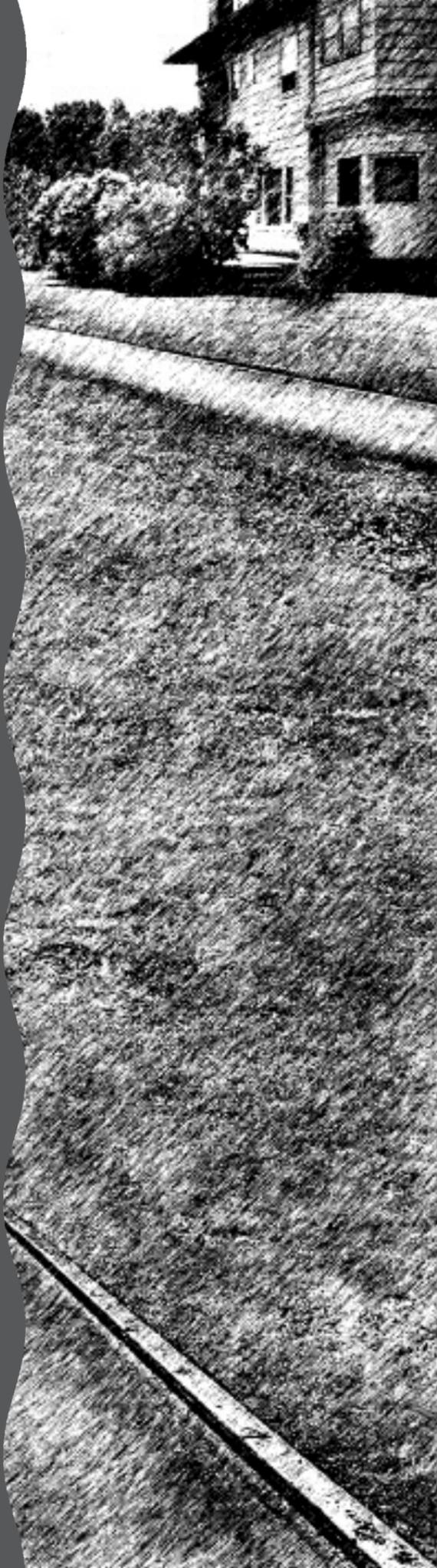


Portland's
Sewer System

Guidelines
for
Homeowners
and
Homebuyers



ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
CITY OF PORTLAND
working for clean rivers



Inspecting Private Sewer Laterals

Realtors often advise clients to inspect sewer laterals of homes they're considering for purchase. In most cases, sewer lines beyond a property's curb line, or proposed curb line, belong to the City of Portland. Video inspections of private sewer laterals that extend into the City sewer system and detect pipes that may need maintenance can be useful if the tapes meet City standards.

(* See sewer line videotape inspection standards.)

The City will review tapes that meet these standards. If a tape shows a defect in a City sewer line, the Bureau of Maintenance will schedule any necessary repairs according to the severity of the problem and the current maintenance workload. The City monitors and maintains the public sewer system on a regular schedule and repairs sewers on a priority basis. Public sewers that are failing or regularly back up into basements are a top priority. Cracked pipes and minor root intrusions are not considered emergency maintenance problems.

Sewer Problems

If the sewer backs up into your building, call a private plumber before you contact the City. If the plumber determines that the problem is in the City sewer system, call the Bureau of Maintenance at 503-823-1700. You can also call that number to report flooded streets and other sewer problems 24 hours a day. Be ready to give a description of the problem, address or location, a contact name and phone number. Emergencies and immediate dangers to health and safety receive the highest priority.

Party Line Sewers

A party line sewer is a private sewer line shared by two or more properties. Party line sewers must be within a recorded private easement and protected by a maintenance agreement between the owners of the properties served by the party line. The City will not approve new party sewer lines or repaired party lines if separate public sewer connections are feasible.

A property owner may lose use of a party line sewer if no such legal protections have been recorded, and one or more of the parties decides not to grant an easement or enter into a main-

tenance agreement. Each property owner would then be required to connect separately to the public sewer.

Prospective homebuyers can call 503-823-7660 for information about a property's sewer connection.

Private Repairs

If your property's roof drains are connected to the sewer system and you repair your sewer lateral by lining or installing a sleeve in the pipe, you are required to reconnect the roof drains to the repaired lateral. Make sure the liner or sleeve does not block the roof drain connection to the lateral and that there is a positive, watertight connection as described in City Code to the public sewer lateral. Also, remember that sewer repairs on private property require a City plumbing permit and inspection. For more information about the City permitting or inspection process, call the Permit Center at 503-823-7310.

Downspout Disconnection Program

Environmental Services encourages homeowners to disconnect their downspouts from the combined sewer system only in targeted neighborhoods. **Not** all downspouts can be safely disconnected and only homeowners in targeted neighborhoods can be reimbursed for disconnecting. Call the Downspout Disconnection Program at 503-823-5858 to see if you qualify.

Keep Portland Sewers Fat Free

Grease blocking sewer pipes is a serious maintenance problem for both the City and private property owners. When grease washes down the sink, it sticks to the insides of sewer pipes and restricts flow. As grease builds up, it can block pipes completely and cause raw sewage to back up into your home or overflow into streets and streams. Help keep sewers fat free. Pour cooking grease into a can and store it in the freezer. When the can is full, toss it in the trash.

Mandatory Sewer Connection

The Mandatory Sewer Connection Program requires developed properties to connect to the public sewer system within three years of being notified that sewer service is available. For more information on the program, call 503-823-4114 or go to www.portlandonline.com/bes/index.cfm?&a=71590&c=31025.

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Sewer line videotape inspection standards:

Clear Picture

If there is debris on the lens, the contractor should flush toilets or start over to clean off the lens for a good picture. The contractor should push the camera at a reasonable speed so that defects can be seen and recorded.

Voice Over

The voice over on the inspection tape should include this information:

- Address of service lateral;
- Date of inspection;
- Where the inspection starts (the starting point where the counter was set to zero);
- Callouts of footages, general callout when nothing to note; and,
- Callouts of footages at any change in material, at any defects and at any other notable conditions.

On Screen

(This is optional. Contractors may not have equipment with on-screen functionality)

- Date
- Time
- Address
- Footage Meter Readings on screen (zero out meter at beginning of inspection)

- ✓ The tape must be accompanied by a detailed written report including all of the above information.
- ✓ The contractor should be able to accurately locate (plus or minus one foot) the exact location of any defect or feature found during the video inspection.
- ✓ The contractor does not determine the severity of any noted problems in the street. The City of Portland will confirm or independently verify identified problems and determine their severity.
- ✓ Scheduling and prioritization of review or repairs is at the City's discretion based on available resources and workload.

Sewer Loans

The City provides low interest loans to finance sewer connection costs and gives some property owners the option of delaying connection in case of financial hardship. Call 503-823-7761 to see if sewer service is available to your property. If our records do not clearly show your property's connection to the City sewer, the City will conduct a dye test at no cost to the property owner to determine if there is a connection.

Sewer Charges

Your sewer bill includes three charges:

The Sewer Volume Charge pays for sewage treatment, sewer construction, and sewer repair and maintenance. Sewer volume charges are based on winter water use or actual water use, whichever is lower.

The Stormwater Management Charge pays for planning, engineering, construction, operation and maintenance of facilities that drain and treat stormwater runoff from roads and private property.

The Base Charge pays for reading water meters and servicing and billing water and sewer customer accounts.

Sewer rates change each year on July 1.

Current rates are posted online at

www.portlandonline.com/bes/index.cfm?&a=35919&c=31019.

To download and print this brochure or go to
[***www.portlandonline.com/bes/index.cfm?&c=31872***](http://www.portlandonline.com/bes/index.cfm?&c=31872)

Useful Phone Numbers

To report problems in the City sewer system, 503-823-1700

For information about:

a property's sewer connection, 503-823-7660

the City permitting or inspection process, 503-823-7310

the Downspout Disconnection Program, 503-823-5858

the Mandatory Sewer Connection Program, 503-823-4114

sewer loans, 503-823-7761