

UNDERSTANDING YOUR HOME'S SANITARY SEWER

The City of Des Plaines regularly receives calls from residents about sanitary sewer back-ups during dry weather. Most of the time, roots in the sewer service line are the cause of the back-ups. Roots from trees and large shrubs seek moisture wherever it is available. If the sewer service lines from your home are cracked or the joints are not tight, nutrient-rich vapor escapes and the roots follow this to find their way into the sewer lines.

Sanitary sewer service lines from the home, up to and including the connection to the City's sanitary or combined sewer, are the homeowner's responsibility. Keep in mind that the city's sanitary or combined sewer can actually be located in the street or even in the parkway across the street. The City of Des Plaines does not cut, clean, or televise residential service lines. Therefore, it is important to know what you can do to help prevent backups caused by roots, and if one does occur, what you could do about it.

Ownership and Insurance

The sewer lateral is owned and maintained by the property owner including any part that extends under the street or public right-of-way. The potential for property damage from sewer backups caused by damaged sewer laterals is something every Des Plaines homeowner needs to consider. Repair or replacement of damaged sewer laterals can cost thousands of dollars and typical homeowners insurance policies do not cover these costs.

However, sewer backup insurance coverage is available from most insurers as a "Rider" or "Endorsement" to homeowners insurance policies. These Riders may also cover the cost to repair or replace damaged sewer laterals. The City recommends you contact your homeowners insurance agent regarding this type of additional coverage. Make clear that you are seeking sewer lateral repair or replacement coverage, as well as coverage for the cost associated with a sewer backup.

There are other third party insurance or warranty products on the market that provide coverage for sewer lateral repair and replacement. The City of Des Plaines cannot recommend any one company and advises residents to carefully research each company before making a decision.



SANITARY SEWER LATERAL PROGRAM

**1420 Miner Street
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SANITARY SEWER LATERAL PROGRAM PROCEDURE

The City of Des Plaines Sanitary Sewer Lateral Program aims to provide limited financial assistance to residents facing sanitary sewer blockage within qualifying areas. A **sanitary sewer lateral** is the section of the homeowner's sewer line that runs from the house to the **sewer main** in the street, parkway, or easement area. If a homeowner experiences a sanitary sewer back-up, the following steps must be followed in order for any work to be eligible for financial assistance (maximum of 30% reimbursement) by the City.

STEP 1

Call the Public Works & Engineering Department at 847.391.5464 to inspect the sewer main and confirm that the main is not blocked and causing the back-up. The resident does not need to be present for this inspection. Any blockages discovered in the main will be cleared by the City. Public Works does not inspect/televise homeowner's lateral sewer lines.

STEP 2

If the main is not causing the back-up, the homeowner will be directed to hire a sewer contractor/plumber to check their individual sewer line. Upon request, the City will provide a list of licensed and bonded sewer contractors/plumbers. If the sewer contractor/plumber discovers a blockage within the right-of-way, the Plumbing Inspector must be contacted at 847.391.5305

If the blockage is within the City's right-of-way or easement and can be cleared, the homeowner will be eligible for a reimbursement of 30% of reasonable rodding costs, up to \$100.

If the blockage cannot be cleared by rodding and the problem is within the right-of-way or easement, the Plumbing Inspector will make the determination to contact a City contractor or authorize the homeowner's plumber to proceed with the repairs at the homeowner's cost. Thirty percent (30%) of the total repair cost can be reimbursed to the homeowner, up to \$4000.

Please note: the City may issue a Form 1099-MISC to residents who have received rebate payments from the City.

If the blockage is *not* within the right-of-way/easement, the homeowner is responsible for all costs. The homeowner is also responsible for all routine maintenance costs for the section of the sewer lateral *not* within the City's right of way/easement.

Questions regarding the Sanitary Sewer Lateral Procedure should be directed to:

**Paul Berner, Plumbing Inspector,
847.391.5305**

