

City of The Dalles

SANITARY SEWER LATERAL POLICY

Effective Date: August 18, 2010

The City provides sanitary sewer service to residents within the City Limits of The Dalles as well as the Urban Growth Boundary of the community. The City owns and operates the main sanitary sewer collection network, lift stations and treatment facilities.

In carrying out this responsibility, the City strives to provide this service in a cost effective manner, ensuring that reasonable schedules of system maintenance, repair, and cleaning occur. The Department, with direction from the City Manager, has dedicated a cleaning and video camera program to determine the integrity and condition of its assets. The Department also administers a program to address sanitary sewer lines which are designated as “troubled sewers” because they have failed in the past due to factors such as flatness, recurring root intrusion, or grease buildup.

The components of the sanitary sewers network are:

1. Sanitary sewer main collectors: large pipelines which route sewerage to the treatment facilities.
2. Sewer lateral: the pipeline between the foundation of a structure and the right-of-way or associated public utility easement closest to the sewer main, and from that point to the sanitary sewer main collector.

Per Oregon Plumbing Specialty Code and City Ordinance, only City crews or licensed, bonded and insured contractors are allowed to work on sewer lines in the City right-of-way or public utility easement. Prior to working in the City right-of-way or public utility easement, the contractor must obtain a Right-of-Way Construction Permit, and possibly also a Street/Sidewalk Closure Permit, from the Public Works Department.

OWNERSHIP AND MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITY

1. The City is responsible for the ownership, operation, maintenance, and replacement of sanitary sewer main collectors.
2. The property owner is responsible for the cost of installing a sewer lateral from the foundation of the structure to the sanitary sewer main collector.
3. For new services, the City will install a clean-out on the sewer lateral at the edge of the right-of-way or public utility easement (typically the back of the sidewalk). The City also encourages installation of clean-outs on existing sewer laterals because a clean-out will facilitate inspection and maintenance, help identify the location of the lateral, and provide an access point to the lateral.
4. The property owner is responsible for assuring that the clean-out remains accessible.
5. The property owner is responsible for the maintenance and cleaning of the entire sewer lateral between the structure and the sanitary sewer main.
6. If, in the maintenance of the sewer lateral, it is determined that a failure of the sewer lateral has occurred, the City will replace the lateral between the sanitary sewer main and the right-of-way or associated public utility easement at no cost to the property owner. This does not imply acceptance of liability by the City.

SANITARY SEWER BACK-UP POLICY

Despite the best efforts of the City, occasionally a sanitary sewer backup occurs. Such backup could be caused by a human factor, an act of nature, or by some other event or condition, most of which are not necessarily acts of omission by the City providing reasonable and prudent responses to maintenance.

The City is interested in helping when it can and does have specialized equipment to offer assistance in cleaning up after a sewer back up incident. The City also can provide a list of cleaning contractors who can provide cleanup services. On an established schedule, the City will clean and inspect all of its sanitary sewer lines and pump stations. When such inspections indicate that lines must be repaired or replaced, the City will prioritize the repair projects, as resources allow.

When it is learned that a back-up of sewage has occurred, the City will respond as follows. It is the City's intent to minimize damages to private property and protect public health.

1. Responding to the scene as quickly as possible.
2. Taking action to assure that the main is clear of obstructions.
3. Evaluating the situation to identify the cause of the backup and the location of the blockage, i.e. whether it is in the main collection system or in the sewer lateral.
4. Cleaning up any external material in the right-of-way or associated public utility easement as soon as possible, by removing contaminated water with the vac-truck or directing it away from populated areas or the stormwater collection system, and by applying lime to the contaminated surface, if appropriate.
5. Notifying the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality within 24 hours, as required.
6. Documenting the impact to the residence or other property through digital photos.
7. Providing the property owner with the "Emergency Water Extraction" and "Cleaning Indoor Sewage Spills" information which includes a list of licensed/bonded/insured clean-up companies and precautions for safely cleaning indoor sewage spills.
8. Explaining to the owner the importance of making contact with a clean-up company as soon as possible to mitigate damages.
9. Preparing a Property Damage Report to document incident information, including the names of all persons at the scene, property damages, contributing factors and corrective action.

The cause and contributing factors of the incident will be evaluated and reported to the City's liability insurance company. Determination of City liability will be made by the insurance adjuster who will communicate with the property owner and/or affected party.