

# WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR SANITARY SEWER LATERAL MAINTENANCE?

The maintenance, repair and replacement of sewer laterals is the responsibility of private homeowners. A sewer lateral is the underground pipe that connects your home to the public sewer main. The City is responsible for maintenance, repair and upgrade of public sewer mains. Typical problems with sewer laterals are: tree root intrusion, grease buildup, and break or collapse.

Tree root intrusion occurs as a result of deteriorated pipes, bad joints or cracks in the sewer lateral. Root growth in the pipe reduces the pipe capacity and traps solid waste. Using chemical foams removes the roots for a period of time; however, the roots will grow back into the lateral. Repairing or replacing the lateral, depending on the pipe conditions, may provide a longer term solution.

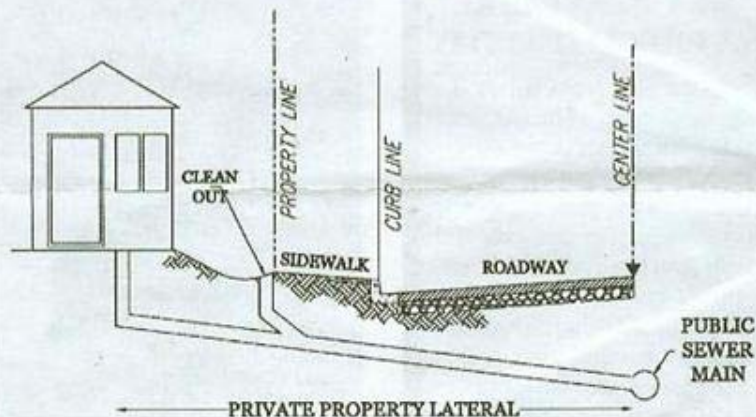
Grease buildup is the result of cooking oil and grease being discharged into the lateral. Grease buildup leads to reduced pipe capacity and increases the chance of trapping solid wastes. Residents can avoid grease buildup in their sewer lateral or main by placing grease and oil in enclosed containers and depositing the tightly-sealed containers in their trash cart.

The repair or replacement of a broken or collapsed sewer lateral requires a permit from the City.

For additional information, see the accompanying "Frequently Asked Questions" (FAQs) about sewer lateral maintenance, or contact the Engineering Division of the Department of Public Works at 619-667-1166.

Source: La Mesa Focus, November 2007

## PRIVATE SEWER LATERALS



## SEWER LATERAL FAQs

### Q – How do I know if there is a blockage and what can I do about it?

A – If water does not drain or drains at a slower rate than normal, it may be an indication of a full or partial blockage. If this happens, you should call a licensed plumber and minimize the use of water until the problem is resolved.

You should also call Public Works at 619-667-1450 during working hours (6:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Mondays through Thursdays and alternate Fridays) or 619-667-1400 during non-working hours. Crews will inspect the public sewer main to ensure that there are no problems in the main.

### Q – How is a lateral cleaned?

A – A plumber normally sends a rod or a snake into the lateral through a cleanout to remove any blockage.

### Q – What is a cleanout, and do I need one if I don't already have one?

A – A cleanout is a "Y" fitting on the sewer lateral that provides access to clean the lateral. It is advisable to install one if you do not have one. For further information, contact the City's Building Division at 619-667-1176.

### Q – How can I have my lateral inspected?

A – A licensed plumber may videotape the sewer lateral to assess the lateral's condition.