



Sewer Laterals: Street or Alley Main Connection

What Is A Sewer Lateral?

A sewer lateral is the pipe that connects all the sinks, drains and toilets in your home or building to the Township sewer main, which is usually located in the Township's right-of-way (street). The entire length of the sewer lateral, extending from your home or building to its point of connection with the Township sewer main underneath the street, is your private property.

Maintenance Is The Property Owner's Responsibility

It is your responsibility as a property owner to maintain your sewer lateral. Proper maintenance includes keeping your lateral clean and clear of any obstruction, such as roots, grease and debris. The level, type and frequency of maintenance required is highly dependent on the age and type of lateral (e.g., plastic vs. cast iron) and the practices of the building occupants. Newer, plastic laterals with intact joints and seals may function for years without problems. Older laterals of concrete, clay or cast iron may have root intrusion or deteriorated sections and require regular inspection and/or more frequent cleaning.

Minimizing Lateral Problems

Drainage problems are commonly caused by obstruction or blockage in the lateral. You can minimize or eliminate such problems by being careful of what you dispose of in your drains and garbage disposals and what you flush down the toilet. Fats, oils and grease (FOG) can clog laterals and eventually block the sewer mains. (For information on how to properly dispose of FOG and other waste see blue box at left).

Maintenance: Keep your lateral Clean

Roots, cooking grease, and/or debris are destructive elements to any wastewater system.

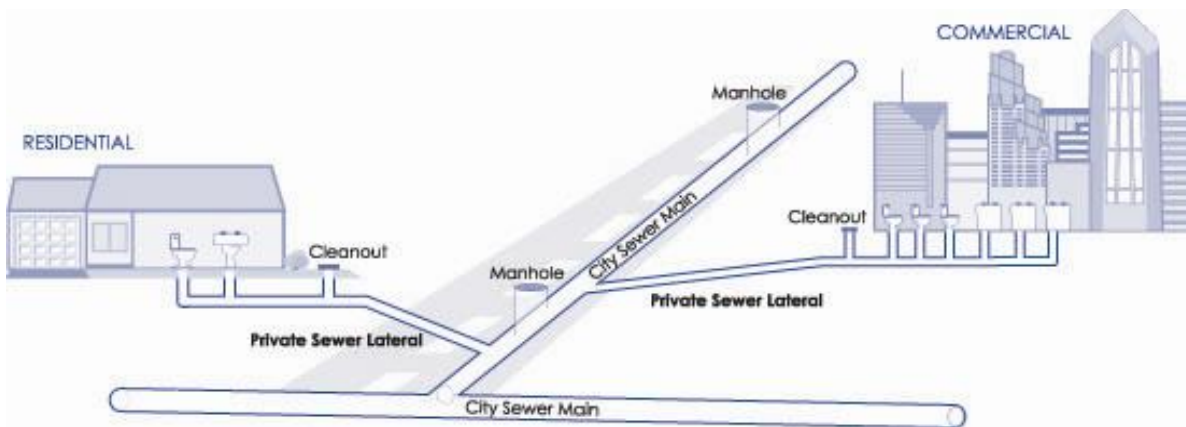
Roots, cooking grease and debris problems in a sewer lateral are the responsibility of the property owner.

Keep your lateral free of anything that may inhibit the flow and lead to a possible sewage spill. To avoid problems with:

Roots - Use a root inhibitor available at most hardware stores or schedule it for periodic mechanical cleaning.

Fats, Oils and Grease (FOG) - In addition to frying pan grease, fats and oils can also come from salad dressings, butter and mayonnaise. Put FOG in the trash and not down the drain.

Debris - Be careful what you put down the drains. Items like disposable wipes, toys, disposable diapers, toilet paper, and feminine hygiene products can cause



If a Problem Occurs

If your drains start to run slowly, there's a good chance you have some sort of obstruction in your lateral. A licensed plumber or drain-cleaning specialist should be able to clear the obstruction. If the lateral is broken, you will have to repair the lateral. In general, problems with your lateral are your responsibility as the property owner.

If you have lost all sewer facilities (e.g. toilet cannot flush and water will not drain at all) as a result of a total blockage or pipe break located in the section of lateral within the Township's right-of-way (street), the Township may correct the problem at no expense to you. Township crews will respond within 24 hours of the report and perform work subject to the following conditions:

- If the Township's investigation finds that the problem is located in the section of the lateral inside your property line, Township crews will not perform work.
- The Township will under no circumstances dig on private property.

If There is a Sewage Spillage

If sewage has spilled from your cleanout, you should control and contain the spill as much as possible with sandbags, dirt or cat litter, turn off the water if necessary, and call a licensed plumber or drain-cleaning specialist.

If the spillage has extended into the Township's right-of-way (street), then call the Township's Sewer Emergency Line at (732) 738-1311. Township crews will clean up spillage within the Township's right-of-way. You will be held responsible for the Township's response costs if the spillage resulted from a blockage or break in the section of the sewer lateral located under your property.

Township Policy Maintenance of Street/Alley Sewer Laterals.

"The property owner shall be responsible for both the routine maintenance and the required cleaning of the sewer line, from the building to the Township sewer main.

When failure or stoppage of a sewer lateral occurs, Township crews will not respond until the property owner has established, through the use of a licensed plumber or certified drain cleaning service, that the stoppage or failure is between the property line and the sewer main.

Common Questions and Answers About Your Sewer Lateral

Q: There is a bad odor coming from my drains. Who do I call?

A: For sewer odors originating from inside your home or building, call a licensed plumber or drain-cleaning specialist. For sewer odors originating from outside your home or building, call the Township's Sewer Emergency Line at (732) 738-1311.

Q: Sewage has backed up into my home or building. What should I do?

A: For assistance with sewer backups, call a licensed plumber or drain-cleaning specialist. Obstructions in your lateral should be cleared by a licensed plumber or drain-cleaning specialist. If the blockage cannot be cleared by routine maintenance methods or the lateral is broken, then lateral will need to be repaired. Repairing your lateral is your responsibility.

Q: Does the Township require a property line cleanout?

A: No, the Township of Woodbridge does not require property line cleanouts. But it is considered a good practice.

Q: I have to call a plumber several times each year to clear my lateral. Isn't there a limit of how many times I have to call a plumber before it is the Township's responsibility to do something?

A: No, there is no limit to how many times you have to call a plumber to clean your lateral if the problem is related to maintenance (e.g. roots or grease/debris buildup). Remember, you are the owner of your private lateral.

Q: Does the Township charge for road opening permits?

A: Yes, the Township of Woodbridge charges for road opening permits.

Q: Will the Township reimburse me for the expenses I incurred?

A: No, there is no reimbursement for plumbing expenses. You are responsible for the maintenance of your sewer lateral. The Township of Woodbridge will only repair or clear at no charge to you a problem located in the main sewer line.