



OUR SEWER SYSTEM A Shared Responsibility

We all have a roll in keeping our community's sewer system functioning properly. Local cities and public entities safeguard the regional sewer mains, but about half of the sewer system is lateral lines owned by private citizens. Property owners are responsible for maintaining the entire length of their lateral lines from their homes or businesses to where the lateral line meets the sewer main under the street. The above drawing highlights the best practices to prevent overflows and protect human health and our environment.

► **PUBLIC SEWER MAIN:** The public sewer main is a collection of pipes that pump the region's used water to the local wastewater treatment plant. Your city or public wastewater agency is responsible for cleaning these lines and keeping them clear. You can help this process by considering what items you put down the drain.

Bathroom: Only flush toilet paper and human waste. Do not flush: "Flushable" wipes • Rags • Dental floss • Pharmaceuticals • Hair • Cat litter, including "flushable" • Feminine products • Household hazardous waste

Kitchen: Protect your pipes! Collect fats, oils, and grease in a container and dispose of it in the trash • Compost egg shells and coffee grounds or put them in the trash

► **LATERAL LINE:** The lateral line connects your home or business to the public sewer main. The property owner is responsible for all maintenance and repairs of the full line, even if the lateral extends beyond the property line. The following two devices can assist with upkeep of the line:

Sewer Relief Valve (SRV) and Cleanout: In the case of a sewer main blockage, this crucial device diverts wastewater into your yard so it doesn't back up into your home. Check your SRV regularly to make sure it's operational and clear of obstructions, especially after storms.

Backflow Protection Device: A valve which clamps shut to protect your home against sewage backups. The device is an industry best practice and is required per California Plumbing Code for some properties.

MAINTAINING Your Lateral Line

As the property owner, it is your responsibility to maintain and repair your private sewer lateral. Maintenance of your sewer lateral is critical to prevent sewage backups on your property or in your home. Most home owners don't give much thought to their sewer laterals until there is a problem, such as a cracked or clogged pipe. However, damage caused from a sewage backup can be expensive (thousands of dollars) and this cost is not always covered by insurance policies. **PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY WITH THE FOLLOWING TIPS.**

SEWER RELIEF VALVE (SRV) AND CLEANOUT

- Be sure your lateral line has a sewer relief valve and cleanout to divert wastewater away from your home should a backup occur.
- If you do not have a SRV, it is recommended you work with a licensed plumber to install this device – some cities require it.
- Inspect your SRV regularly.

VIDEO INSPECTION

- Your lateral line runs underground.
- To inspect it, a licensed plumber can put a camera through the line.
- The camera recording will show if there are cracks or breaks in the pipe, offsets, or root intrusion.
→ You can then clean, repair, or replace the line as needed.

Home Buyers: Note that home inspections rarely include an inspection of the property's sewer lateral line. A video inspection may protect you from future, costly cleanings and repairs.

BACKFLOW PROTECTION DEVICE

- This valve will clamp shut to protect your home against sewage backup.
- If your lateral line does not have this device, you should seriously consider having one installed.
- The backflow or overflow protection device will give you and your plumber easy access to your lateral line for cleaning and maintenance.
- The device is an industry best practice and is required per California Plumbing Code for some properties.

**Did you know
the leading cause of
sewage backups is
root intrusion?**

CLOG BUSTER

Fighting clogs is a dirty job but someone's got to do it! Keep your pipes clean with maintenance and monitor what you put down the drain.

FAT-FREE SEWERS: Cooking oils/grease harden on pipes, leading to clogs and damaged infrastructure!

Never pour fats, oils, or grease down the drain, instead:



Scrape It



Can It



Trash It*

*For larger quantities, like leftover turkey fryer oil, take it to your local household hazardous waste collection facility | mrwmd.org

WHAT NOT TO FLUSH: Only flush toilet paper and human waste—anything else belongs in the trash!

X "Flushable" Wipes

X Pharmaceuticals

X Disinfectant Wipes

X Paper Towels

X Rags/Cloths

X You Name It!

Trash After Use

