

SANITARY SEWER BACKUP PROCEDURE

Introduction

This Sanitary Sewer Backup Procedure is provided to ensure that property owners, certified licensed technicians, and plumbers gain a clear understanding of the responsibilities of the property owner and the City of Prince George (City) with respect to sanitary sewer blockages.

Definitions

Refer to *City of Prince George Sanitary Sewer Bylaw No. 7897, 2006*.

The City's Sanitary Sewer System and Maintenance Plan

The sanitary sewer system services all connected City properties. To ensure good working condition of the system, all City maintenance is performed in accordance to the Sanitary Sewer Maintenance Plan.

Cause of Blockages

A back up (surcharge) of sewage is caused by a blockage in the line located somewhere between your home and the City's sanitary sewer main on the street. This blockage could be from grease, wipes, diapers, washing machine lint, and/or other foreign objects.

The City cannot prevent or continuously monitor the disposal of items into the sanitary sewer system. It is the property owner's responsibility to maintain the sanitary sewer lateral (building sewer + service connection) and regulate substances entering the sanitary sewer system from their property.

Responsibilities and Procedure

In the event of a blocked sewer, call the City immediately at 250-561-7600 (24 hours a day/365 days a year). The City will not provide reimbursement if the City has not been notified of the blocked sanitary sewer at the time of the incident. Immediate action must be taken to clear a blockage as failure to act in a timely manner may increase damage to your property and to neighbouring properties.

Upon receiving the call, our staff will work with you to determine if the blockage is in the City main (**City's responsibility**) or in the sanitary sewer lateral (**property owner's responsibility**). If the blockage occurs in the City's sanitary sewer main, the City's Utility Operation Divisions will take action to clear the blockage. If the blockage occurs in the sanitary sewer lateral, it is the responsibility of the property owner to remove it.

In the event of a surcharge, the information below may be required should you choose to process an insurance claim:

- Take pictures of any damage caused by the sewer surcharge
- Write down all contact information, costs, calls of professionals involved
- Document your actions/questions with your plumber/licenced technician

Questions you should be asking your plumber or licenced technician

1. Did the plumber use a snake, root cutter or something else to clear the blockage?
2. If root cutter was used what size?
(Most services are 4" and a 2" root cutter will only temporarily relieve the problem but in most cases it will back up again in time)
3. How many times did the plumber work the line with the snake or root cutter?
(It usually takes several passes to make sure the blockage has been completely removed)
4. What was the total distance root cut or snaked?
(This helps identify if the plumber has actually cleared the entire line or just a portion)
5. Where was the blockage located?
(This helps you identify where your blockage was located)
6. Did the plumber suggest you do a CCTV inspection?
(This can be a costly expense and recommended more so if there has been a history of sewer backups or problems)

Repair and Reimbursements

The City may be responsible for any structural defects identified within the service connection. All repairs required on the building sewer side are the responsibility of the property owners (see Fact Sheet for City and property owner responsibilities).

In order to determine if a structural defect is present, a closed caption television video (CCTV) inspection of the line is required to be submitted to the City for investigation. If the defect is structural only and within the service connection, a reimbursement up to a maximum of \$185.00 for CCTV work, \$30.00 for the service locate, and \$20.00 dollars for DVD will be provided. If there are defects/problems of the building sewer and service connection, then you may receive a partial reimbursement. This reimbursement shall only be approved once in a three year period.

A DVD of the CCTV inspection must be dropped off at Public Works office (@ 3990 18th Avenue). The DVD will become the property of the City. If the CCTV inspection video does not meet City standards, it will be returned without any reimbursement.

Provincial Regulations - *Local Government Act*

The City is NOT presumed to be responsible for the consequences of a blocked sanitary line just because the blockage is on City side. The City is regulated by the British Columbia *Local Government Act*.

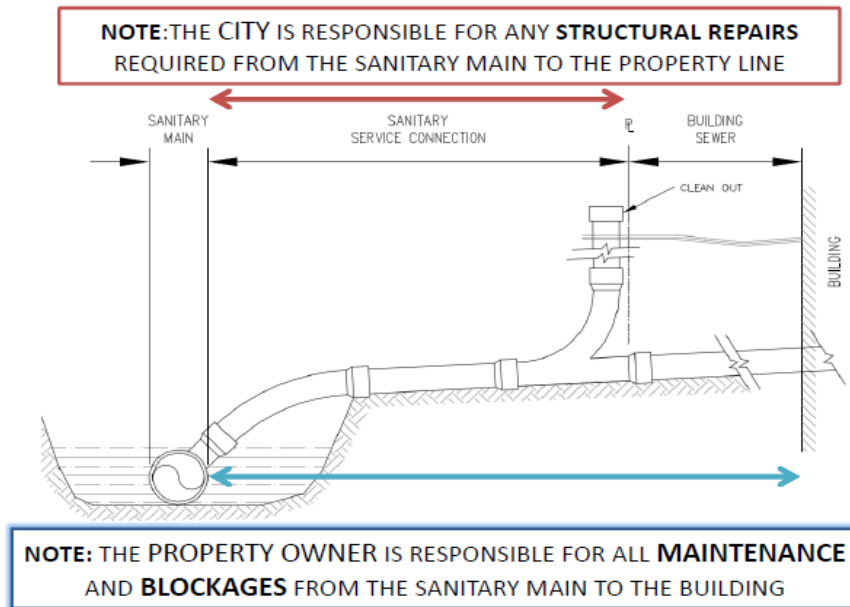
"Immunity against certain nuisance actions

744 A municipality, council, regional district, board or improvement district, or a greater board, is not liable in any action based on nuisance if the damages arise, directly or indirectly, out of the breakdown or malfunction of

- (a) a sewer system,*
- (b) a water or drainage facility or system, and/or*
- (c) a dike or a road."*

SANITARY SEWER BACKUP PROCEDURE - FACT SHEET

Call the City of Prince George immediately at 250-561-7600 to report the sewer backup
(24 hours a day/365 days a year).



1. The City will work with you to identify the location of the blockage (City sanitary sewer main, sanitary service line, or building sewer). If the blockage is in of the City's sewer main, the City will clear the blockage.
2. If the blockage is not in the City's sanitary sewer main, then the property owner is responsible for the clearing of any blockages within the sanitary service connection or the building sewer. Many local plumbers can provide this service.
3. If you would like assistance on how to start a claim, please call the City at 250-561-7600.
4. The City is **NOT presumed to be responsible** for the consequences of a blocked sanitary sewer line just because the blockage is on City side. The City is protected by the *Local Government Act*
5. If you have homeowners or another type of property insurance coverage, notify your insurance agent of the sewer backup to see if such a claim is covered.
6. Document the actions you take (calls, contacts, costs) in response to the sewer backup.

**The City will not provide reimbursement if the City has not been notified
of the blocked sanitary sewer at the time of the incident.**