



ENGINEERING & PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
UTILITIES OPERATIONS
3990 - 18TH Ave | Prince George, BC, Canada V2N 4R8

SANITARY SEWER BACKUP PROCEDURE

Introduction

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

Key Definitions

CCTV- means closed caption television.

Building Sewer – a pipe, including manholes and inspection chambers, laid on private real property, connecting a service connection with a building or structure.

Locate – to identify or discover the place or location of:

Property Owner – means any legal entity who is the Owner of the property and/or who has responsibility for the property. Homeowner may also be used.

Sanitary Sewer Main – is the CoPG pipe that collects wastewater (sewerage) from one or more properties.

Service Connection – means a pipe and other material necessary to connect from a property line to the City's **sanitary sewer main**. This may also include the cleanout on property line.

References

City of Prince George Sanitary Sewer Bylaw No. 7897, 2006
British Columbia Local Government Act

City of Prince George Sanitary Sewer Maintenance Plan

The City of Prince George (City) operates and maintains a sanitary sewer collection system that serves many of the properties within the City boundaries. The City performs maintenance on its sanitary sewer system to ensure that it is in good working condition. Maintenance of the sanitary sewer system is done pursuant to the City's Sanitary Sewer Maintenance Plan.

Blocked Sanitary Sewers

Blockages in a sanitary sewer main may occur on occasion and can cause sewage to back-up into a residence. Sewer line blockages are caused by vegetation growing into the line and/or improper disposal of items such as grease, wipes, diapers, washing machine lint, and other items flushed down the toilet. Since the City cannot prevent the inappropriate disposal of items into the sewer system, it is impossible to prevent all sewer blockages and back-ups, even with a routine maintenance and inspection program.

If a blockage occurs in the City's sanitary sewer main, the City's Utility Operation Divisions will take action to clear the blockage. The City endeavors to have employees available at all times to respond to sewer back-ups. Our staff will work with you to try and determine if the blockage is in the City main (**City Responsibility**) or in the service connection and building sewer (**Property Owners Responsibility**)

Property owners are responsible for providing maintenance and clearing of any blockages (roots, grease and/or other debris) found within the building sewer system and sanitary service connection.

**If you have a blocked sewer, call the City immediately at
250-561-7600 (24 hours a day/365 days a year).**

It is important to take prompt action to start clearing a blocked sewer line as failure to act in a timely manner may increase damage to your property and to neighbouring properties. Informing the City of any sewer back-up is critical so the line can be inspected to determine if the blockage is in the City's sanitary sewer main.

In the event of a sewer back-up you should document your actions. Try to take pictures of any damage caused by the sewer backup and write down information about the contacts you make and any actions taken. This information will be of value if your loss is covered by insurance.

Repair and Reimbursements

The City may be responsible for any defects identified within the service connection. Any repairs required on the building sewer side are the responsibility of the property owners. (See **Fact Sheet** for drawing showing division of responsibilities).

It may be necessary to complete a video inspection (CCTV) of the line to determine the condition of the sanitary sewer service. If the defect is within the service connection a reimbursement may be provided up to a maximum of \$185.00 for CCTV work, \$30.00 for a service locate and \$20.00 dollars for a DVD (plus tax). If there are issues or problems on both sides, then you may receive a partial reimbursement. This refund shall only be approved once in a three year period.

A DVD of the CCTV inspection must be dropped off at Public Works office located at 3990 18th Ave and will become the property of the City for our records. 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

244 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."

Questions you should be asking your plumber or licenced technician

(document these items)

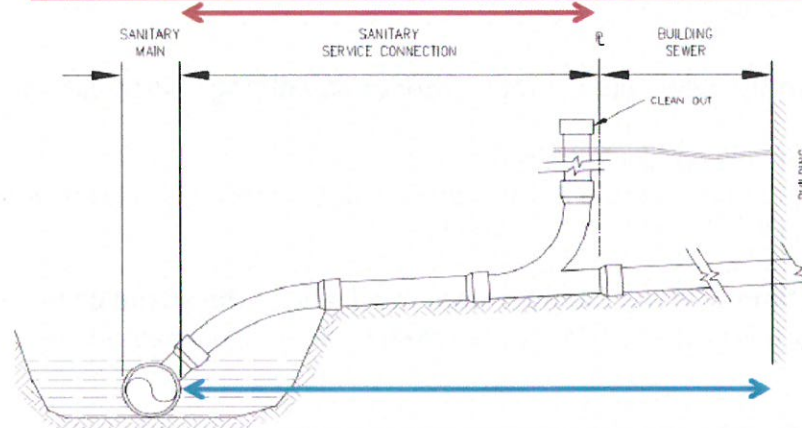
- 1. Did the plumber use a snake, root cutter or something else to clear the blockage?**
- 2. If root cutter was used what size?**
(Most services are 4" and a 2" root cutter will only temporarily relieve the problem but in most cases it will back up again in time)
- 3. How many times did the plumber 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)

If you have questions regarding the City's sanitary sewer maintenance program, sewer back-up response or a specific incident, please contact Utilities Operations Division at 250-561-7600.

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).

**NOTE: THE CITY IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY STRUCTURAL REPAIRS
REQUIRED FROM THE SANITARY MAIN TO THE PROPERTY LINE**



**NOTE: THE PROPERTY OWNER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL MAINTENANCE
AND BLOCKAGES FROM THE SANITARY MAIN TO THE BUILDING**

1. The City will work with you to identify if the location of the blockage is in the City sanitary sewer main or somewhere within the 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* (please read the Residential Sanitary Sewer Backup Procedure document for additional clarification).
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 reimburse anything if the City has not been notified
of the blocked sewer at the time of the incident.**