

City of Antigo  
Street Department  
Sanitary Sewer Policy  
2009



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## Coping with Sewer Back-ups

### General Information

A sewer backup creates a stressful and emotional situation for the homeowner/renter. In some cases it may cause health and safety concerns as well as significant property loss. A proper response to a sewer backup can greatly minimize property damage and diminish the threat of illness.

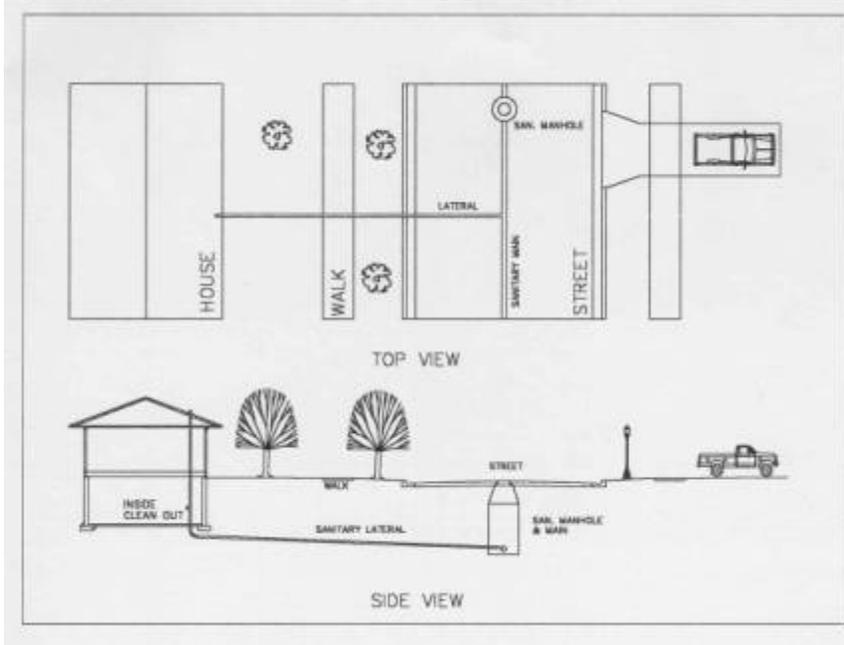
The City of Antigo makes every effort to be responsive to a resident's needs and concerns when a sewer backup occurs. The City has a sewer crew whose sole duty is to inspect, clean and maintain sewers on a daily basis. They are available on a 7-day a week, 24 hour a day basis to minimize the possibility of sewer problems. Unfortunately, because a sewer is not a closed system, many things put into the sewer can clog the system. Large amounts of grease from restaurants and disposable (and cloth) diapers are two common items that cause problems. While the City of Antigo has adopted rules prohibiting the discharge of any substance likely to cause a sewer obstruction, and can try to educate the public about the problems they cause, there is really no way we can absolutely prevent this from happening. Other factors can cause backups as well, such as tree roots, which can grow into and obstruct the system.

### Procedures for Sewer Backups

**If a resident has a sewer backup problem, it is up to the owner to determine the problem is in their lateral.** If the problem persists after owner has determined the problem is not in their service lateral, they should call the Street Department at 623-4754. After 3 p.m., Saturday, Sunday, or holidays, the Police Department should be notified at the non-emergency number, 627-6411. Resident should state that they are reporting a sewer emergency. Backed up sewer lines, line breaks, sewage odors and overflowing manholes are considered an emergency.

If the Street Department personnel answering the emergency call find the problem is in the sewer lateral, the homeowner or business is responsible for correcting the problem. The owner of the property is responsible for maintaining and cleaning the sewer lateral for the building or home to the City's sewer main, including the connection on the sewer main. Locating the lateral is also the responsibility of the property owner. If a residence reports sewer backup problems more than three (3) times in an anniversary year with no problems being found on any of the three occasions, personnel will not be required to assist the homeowner or business owner. Homeowners and business owners need to exercise their own due diligence in dealing with sewer difficulties and the City of Antigo cannot continue to extend dollars if the owner of the property does not comply with recommendations made by city personnel to seek the assistance of a professional plumber.

A sewer lateral is defined as the pipeline between the City sanitary sewers main, usually located in the street and the building. The sewer lateral is owned and maintained by the property owner including any part, which may extend into the street or public right of way. Often times, the cause of sewer backup is in the lateral and is from items that the line is not meant to handle, such as kid's toys, underwear, towels, diapers, paper products (other than toilet paper) and the like. In the City of Antigo, the most likely cause for repeated backups is roots growing in the lateral from a residence or building. It would be the responsibility of the owner to remove, cutout or kill such roots from their lateral. The City of Antigo does not sell or endorse any particular way or product to remove roots from a lateral. The only way to completely end a reoccurring root problem is to have the lateral replaced with new, plastic, pipe by a plumber who properly connects the service to the main. **Please see diagram to the left.**



## Sewer System Maintenance Procedures

1. All sewer system lines/components should be designed by qualified personnel and installed in accordance with the specifications.
2. All operators should be trained in the proper procedures and use of the equipment for the cleaning and inspection methods used, i.e.; flushing, jetting, rodding, televising. This training should be documented when performed.
3. If any of the cleaning and inspection activities are contracted out, certificates of insurance for workers compensation and general liability (including completed operations) should be obtained from contractors.
4. Lines that have been identified as problem lines or critical lines (determined by the department head) should be documented, then inspected and cleaned on a more frequent basis (frequency again determined by the department head who will consult with the system engineers). Typical types of problems include, but are not limited to the following:

Tree roots

Dip in line

Lift station problem

Accumulation of debris from sources dumping into our lines.

5. Should a blockage in a line be encountered during maintenance or at any other time, care should be taken to avoid excessive surge in downstream lines, including if necessary, pumping around the blockage to release head pressure prior to removing the blockage. Blockages encountered during maintenance should be documented so that an accurate record can be kept.
6. Logs will be kept at the Street Department to record maintenance activity. Personnel will document any unusual findings or occurrences, location of maintenance and date which maintenance was performed.



LEGEND:

Approved by Public Works Committee on 11/24/09

Approved by Common Council on 12/09/09

Resolution 149-09