



**CITY OF ROLLING MEADOWS  
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT  
UTILITIES DIVISION**

**SANITARY  
SEWER  
PROBLEMS**



***A Guide for Property Owners & Renters***

## **SANITARY SEWER PROBLEMS**

**If you are experiencing problems with your sanitary sewer, call the City of Rolling Meadows Public Works Underground Utilities Division.**

Representatives are on-call, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, including weekends and holidays.

**MONDAY -  
FRIDAY: 7:00 am -  
3:00 pm  
847-963-0500**

**AFTER HOURS  
(Nights/Weekends):  
847-255-2416  
(non-emergency Police Dept.)**

- ◆ **A Public Works Department representative will be dispatched to check the main sanitary sewer line at NO COST TO YOU.**
- ◆ **Please call the City prior to calling a plumber or rodding contractor. This could save you money if the problem is in the City's main sewer line.**
- ◆ **The City's Public Works representative will then determine if you need to contact a plumbing contractor.**

### **INDICATIONS OF A SANITARY SEWER LATERAL PROBLEM**

The pipe that connects the residence/commercial building to the sewer main system is called the sanitary sewer lateral. (See diagram #1). Signs that laterals may require attention include frequently clogged drains, an odor of sewage, and basement backups, usually following rainfall or during periods of high water usage.

### **WHAT IS A SANITARY SEWER CLEANOUT?**

A sewer cleanout is a point of access where the sewer lateral can be serviced. It is usually 6 inches in diameter and has a tight-fitting steel, concrete or plastic cap. If a cleanout cannot be located on your property, you may not have one or it may be buried under dirt or concrete. (See pictures of cleanout examples to the right.)

### **WHAT IS THE CAUSE OF BASEMENT BACKUPS?**

A variety of factors could cause sanitary sewer backups in the basement. Commonly, this can happen during heavy rain storms due to sanitary systems becoming inundated with an overabundance of storm water. Broken laterals can allow tree roots, debris or rainwater into the pipe which may cause blockages, building backups or overflows in the building.

### **WHAT SHOULD I DO DURING A HEAVY RAINFALL SEWER BACKUP?**

Call the City promptly so they can check the sanitary sewer system and work to determine when and where the backups occur to alleviate further issues. During periods of prolonged rainfalls, it is common to experience slower moving drains until the system catches up.

# OWNER RESPONSIBILITIES

## WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MAINTENANCE?

The private lateral is considered part of the home/building **which extends from the property line through the City right-of-way**. The owner's responsibility for maintenance ends where the lateral joins the sewer main line. It is, therefore, the responsibility of the owner to ensure that regular maintenance, repairs or replacement take place to ensure the longevity of the lateral. (See diagram #1 in this brochure).

## WHAT IS REGULAR MAINTENANCE?

The City of Rolling Meadows considers REGULAR MAINTENANCE of the sanitary lateral by rodding from an outside 6" cleanout with a 6" root cutter by a plumbing contractor every 2-3 years, or as determined by past history or problems.



6" PVC Cleanout with black cap



6" Clay Cleanout with concrete cap



6" Cleanout in unknown location (under deck)



6" PVC Cleanout - newly installed



2" & 6" Root Cutter



6" Tee Cleanout

## CLEANOUT TIPS

- ◆ Know where your cleanout is for quick access to clear blockages, backups or overflows.
- ◆ Keep your cleanout cap on and in good condition.

# PLUMBING CONTRACTORS

**REMEMBER: ALWAYS CALL THE CITY PRIOR TO CALLING A PLUMBING CONTRACTOR** if a sanitary sewer backup has occurred or if you think the problem has been caused outside of the home.

## SELECTING A RODDING CONTRACTOR

- ◆ Obtain quotes from multiple licensed contractors for cost comparisons;
- ◆ Most contractors will charge extra for nights, weekends and holidays;
- ◆ Confirm that the contractor's work is guaranteed and for how long;
- ◆ Inform the contractor of any large trees over your sanitary service line;
- ◆ Ensure that the contractor's equipment is adequate to rod the service line if your service line is more than 100' in length;
- ◆ Remind them that a City-issued permit must be obtained prior to most work.

## A PLUMBING CONTRACTOR IS NEEDED IF:

- ◆ **THE CITY'S PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT HAS INSTRUCTED YOU TO CONTACT ONE**
- ◆ **REGULAR MAINTENANCE IS NEEDED (2-3 years)**
- ◆ **YOU CANNOT LOCATE YOUR 6" OUTSIDE CLEANOUT**
- ◆ **YOU DO NOT HAVE A 6" OUTSIDE CLEANOUT**
  - The rodding contractor must install a 6" cleanout in conjunction with a 6" tee;
  - A City-issued permit must be obtained **PRIOR** to the work being done;
  - **The City will not initiate a right-of-way repair until a 6" cleanout is installed and/or rodding has been attempted.**
- ◆ **A SEWER ISSUE EXISTS WITHIN THE OWNER SPECIFIED AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY** (See Diagram #1). This includes the easement/City right-of-way.
- ◆ **A BLOCKAGE EXISTS FROM THE 6" CLEANOUT TO WHERE THE LATERAL JOINS THE SEWER MAIN LINE**  
If the Contractor determines that his sewer rod cannot make it to the City main sewer line, **CALL THE CITY IMMEDIATELY BEFORE THE CONTRACTOR REMOVES THE SEWER ROD FROM THE SERVICE LINE.**

**IMPORTANT:** A rodding contractor must rod from an outside 6" cleanout all the way to the sanitary sewer main and from the 6" cleanout to the house vent stack. To effectively clean the sewer service line, the contractor should use the proper sized cutters to open and completely reinstate the lateral. **The cutter should be the same size as the pipe.**

# CITY PUBLIC WORKS SERVICES

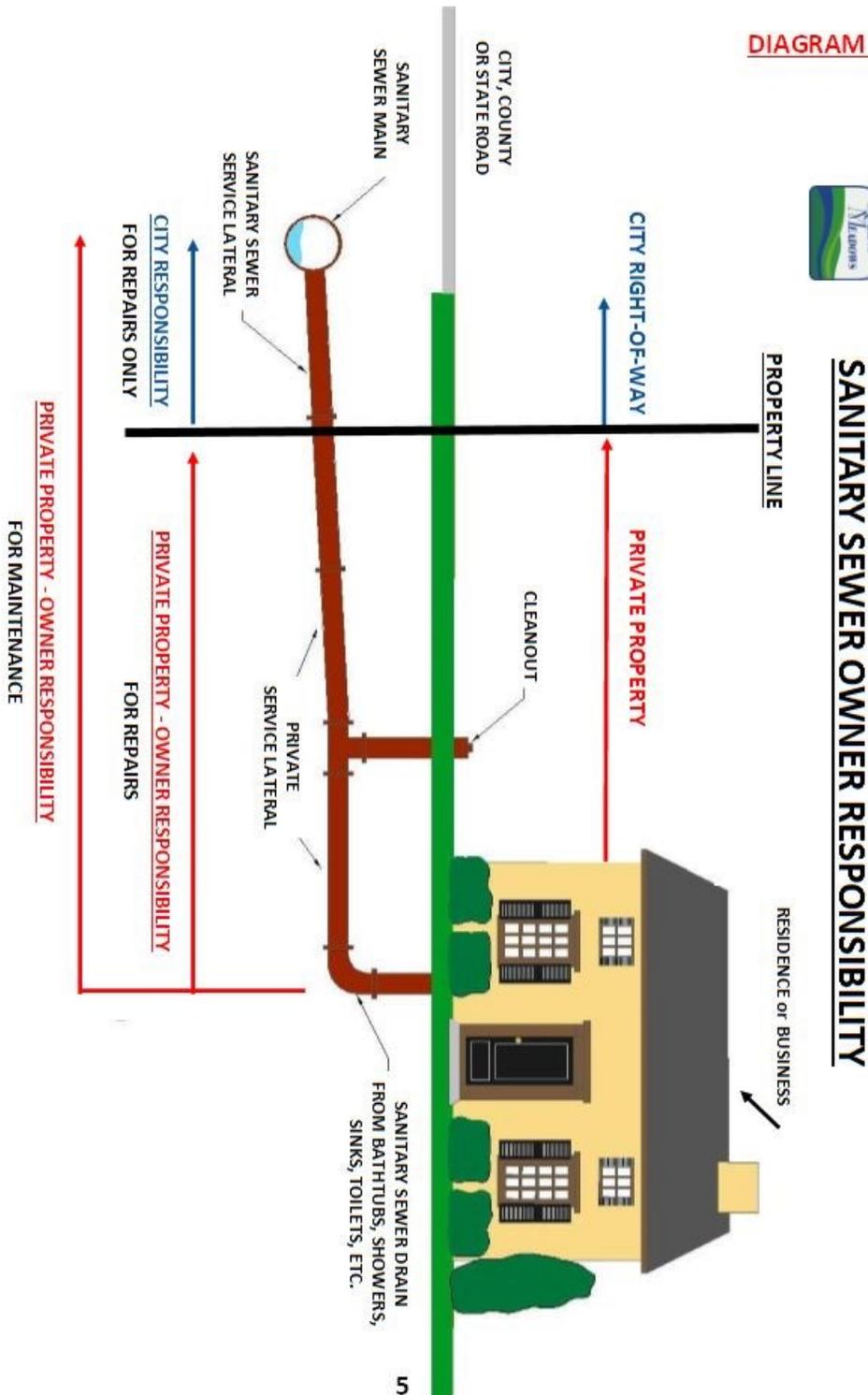
## WHEN TO CALL PUBLIC WORKS:

- ◆ **FOR ALL SEWER ISSUES - INCLUDING HEAVY RAINFALL BACKUPS. CALL THEM PRIOR TO CONTACTING A PLUMBER/RODDING CONTRACTOR**
  - ◆ **TO ADVISE THE OWNER IF A CONTRACTOR IS NEEDED**
  - ◆ **TO PERFORM A NO-COST VERIFICATION OF REGULAR MAINTENANCE**  
This verification will be done by the City's Public Works representative using a televising camera to inspect the contractor's work.
  - ◆ **TO ASSIST A PLUMBING CONTRACTOR WHEN THE BLOCKAGE IS DETERMINED TO BE IN THE CITY RIGHT-OF-WAY**  
Please call PRIOR to the contractor removing their equipment from the sanitary sewer service line.
  - ◆ **TO VERIFY A BLOCKAGE FROM THE CITY RIGHT-OF-WAY TO THE SEWER MAIN.**  
THE CITY WILL NOT INITIATE A RIGHT-OF-WAY REPAIR WITHOUT A 6" CLEANOUT INSTALLED AND A VALID ATTEMPT TO CLEAN THE LINE BY OTHER MEANS.  
In this instance, the City will do one of two things:
    1. Use a lateral camera to verify the blockage location;
    2. Call an outside contractor and attempt to re-rod and/or re-verify the blockage location.
- If the blockage is verified in the right-of-way, and the City's contractor removes the blockage, the cost will be invoiced to the property owner.



*Rolling Meadows Public Works employees use a televising camera to inspect a sanitary sewer lateral. This service is offered by the City to identify problems and to confirm proper maintenance and repairs.*

DIAGRAM #1



# PREVENTING FUTURE ISSUES

## BEST-PRACTICES

TO AVOID PROBLEMS AND PROLONG  
THE LIFE OF YOUR SANITARY SEWER

- ◆ **CEASE THE GREASE!** Disposing 'liquid' grease down your sink quickly re-forms into a solid and is a frequent cause of sewer blockages/backups.
- ◆ **DO NOT FLUSH TRASH OR OTHER INSOLUABLES!** Sewer laterals are not large in diameter and are intended for the passage of water and soluble waste only.



*Grease-clogged pipe*



*Cracked lateral pipe*

- ◆ **SCHEDULE REGULAR MAINTENANCE** of your sewer lateral every 2-3 years with a licensed contractor to ensure proper functioning of the system.
- ◆ **TREE ROOTS CLOG/CRACK PIPES TOO!**
  - Remove trees that grow over the path of the service lateral
  - Do not plant trees in the path of the service lateral



*Visual of roots in sanitary lateral*



*Root-clogged pipe*

- ◆ Know where your cleanout is and keep it free of growth and debris.
- ◆ Keep the cleanout cap on and in good shape to block rain and debris from entering the lateral.



## CITY OF ROLLING MEADOWS PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

847-963-0500

[www.cityrm.org](http://www.cityrm.org)

3900 Berdnick Street  
Rolling Meadows, IL 60008

### *For Permit Questions or Applications:*

Contact

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

847-394-8500 x5000

[www.cityrm.org](http://www.cityrm.org)

3600 Kirchoff Road  
Rolling Meadows, IL 60008

