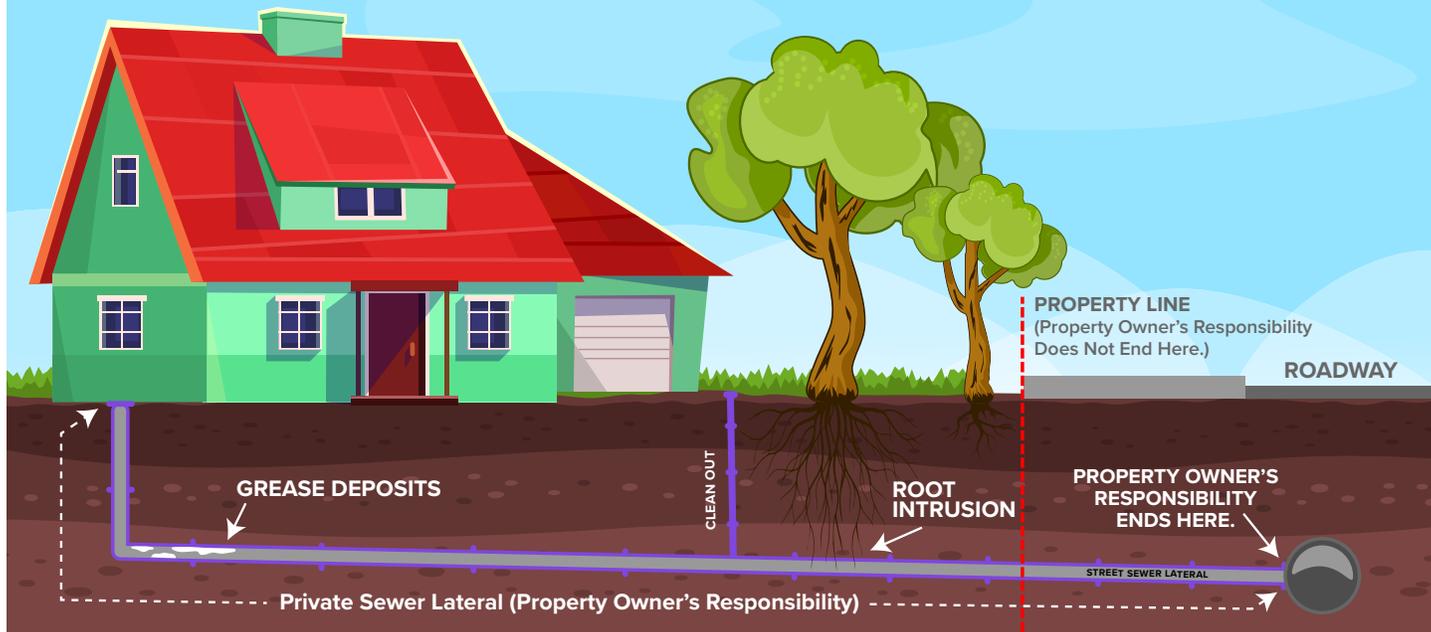




Understanding Your Private Sewer Lateral



Did you know?

Property owners have a responsibility to maintain the Private Sewer Lateral portion of the Sewer Collections System? Property owners are required to maintain the entire length of the Private Sewer Lateral, which extends from the property to the sewer main located in the street or a nearby easement. Maintaining the Private Sewer Lateral includes keeping the line flowing and free of debris such as grease build-up, tree roots or sand.

What is a Private Sewer Lateral?

The Private Sewer Lateral, also known as “Sewer Lateral” and “Service Lateral Line,” is a pipe that conveys a property’s wastewater to the public sewer main in the street. Maintenance and repair of the full length of the Private Sewer Lateral is the responsibility of the property owner. The portion of the Private Sewer Lateral that extends beyond the property line (referred to as “Street Sewer Lateral” per CVWD Code) in the public right of way is also the owner’s responsibility to maintain and repair.

What is a Sewer Main?

A Sewer Main, also called a “Sewer Main Line,” is a publicly owned pipeline that receives wastewater flows from Private Sewer Laterals to collect wastewater. Sewer Mains convey wastewater through the CVWD’s Collection System for wastewater treatment.

What can happen if a Private Sewer Lateral is not properly maintained?

If a Private Sewer Lateral is improperly maintained, it may create a blockage in the line, which can cause raw sewage to back up into the property. Unfortunately, many Private Sewer Laterals go unmaintained until a leak or backup occurs and causes damage to the interior of the property. Unmaintained Private Sewer Laterals that are blocked or fail can also contribute to Sanitary Sewer Spills in the public wastewater collections system, risking a public health hazard.

All such maintenance and repairs shall be performed at the owner’s expense, and they shall be liable for all damages, which may result from failure to do so. When repairing the Street Sewer Lateral portion of the Private Sewer Lateral, CVWD can provide an approved contractor list containing the names of contractors eligible to perform work within CVWD’s service area and right-of-way. This list can be found at www.cvwd.org, search Prequalification Contractors List.

How can I manage my Private Sewer Lateral?

Repairing a crack or correcting a backup in the Private Sewer Lateral is much more costly than performing regular maintenance and adopting best practices. The following measures can help minimize the risk of a backup or failure of the Private Sewer Lateral:

- Maintain your lateral through proper cleaning, repair, and replacement. It is recommended to inspect the sewer lateral every 5 to 10 years.
- Install a cleanout pipe in the Private Sewer Lateral if one is not present.
- Never pour fats, oils, or grease in drains, as these will harden and stick to the inside of pipes, potentially causing a blockage.
- Do NOT use your garbage disposal with hot water or detergent to wash grease down the drain
- Never pour unwanted household chemicals, such as paint thinner, pesticides, fertilizers or automotive waste down the drain.
- Do not flush “flushable” wipes, as these products can clog sewer pipes causing blockages and back-ups.

Coachella Valley Water District Ordinance 1472

Code 4.05.070 Street Sewer Laterals.

A. General Provisions.

1. Requirements. After providing sanitation service in any area of CVWD, CVWD may declare the further maintenance or use of septic tanks or any other local means of sewage disposal in such area to be a public nuisance and may require a property used by human beings to be connected to the sewer within 90 days after written notice; provided, that the sanitation system is available for use within 200 feet of the property.

A building sewer lateral shall be installed in accordance with the requirements of the governing agency. The applicant shall pay for the cost of installing the building sewer lateral and shall be responsible for the cost of maintaining it. CVWD may inspect the installation.

Code 4.05.100 Standards.

A. Plans and Specifications.

All plans and specifications shall be submitted to CVWD in advance of construction and no construction shall start until the plans and specifications have been approved by CVWD. CVWD will provide the applicant the building and street sewer lateral list containing the names of contractors eligible to perform work within CVWD’s service area.

B. Installations.

1. Street Sewer Laterals. A street sewer lateral from an existing sanitation system shall be installed only by employees of CVWD, or others authorized in writing by CVWD.

All street sewer laterals to be installed in new subdivisions shall be installed by the subdivider before streets are paved and shall be terminated in a plug or shall be connected to a building sewer lateral, unless otherwise approved by the general manager. The applicant shall pay for the cost of installing the street sewer lateral and shall be responsible for the cost of maintaining it.

CVWD will provide inspection of the street sewer lateral installation from an existing sanitation system done by others at the applicant’s expense, as provided for in CVWDC 4.05.190.

2. Interceptors/Separators. No interceptor/separator shall be installed without prior approval from CVWD. Applicant shall notify CVWD 48 hours prior to the start of installation and all installations may be inspected by CVWD personnel. (Ord. 1427.4 § 3-4, 2022)

Code 4.05.110 CVWD Responsibility.

The CVWD’s responsibility ends at the point where the sanitation system ends, or in the case of any special installation approved by CVWD, except that such responsibility does not include the street sewer lateral. (Ord. 1427.4 § 3-5, 2022)