

Sewer Lateral “Routine Maintenance” is the responsibility of the property owner, from the building to the sewer main (Section 4(4)(b) of the By-law Respecting Water and Sewerage).

Water & Sewerage Services uses the following procedures when responding to a sewer back-up.

1. When the property owner suspects a sewer flow problem he shall report the problem to Water & Sewerage Services (24 hour service, 658-4455).
2. Water and Sewerage Services determines whether the main sewer is flowing freely. If the main sewer is obstructed, the City corrects the problem.


3. If the main sewer is flowing freely, the owner is directed to determine if the problem is within his lateral. If the problem is internal the owner corrects the problem.
4. If the problem is suspected to be in the lateral, the owner is required to undertake “routine maintenance”. Routine maintenance means flushing the sewer lateral with a Water Jet Sewer Flusher, from the building to the sewer main. (“Plumber’s snakes” or “plumber’s helper” are not considered routine maintenance.)
5. If, after the use of a Water Jet Sewer Flusher the blockage is not cleared, the owner shall notify Water & Sewerage Services, Water & Sewerage Services may try to determine the location of the blockage (while the flusher is still on site), or may recommend the owner hire a sewer video camera to video the inside of the lateral.

6. If the uncleared blockage is on private property, the owner shall correct the problem. If the uncleared blockage is on City property, the City shall correct the problem and may reimburse the property owner the cost of the sewer flusher and the videoing of the sewer lateral only. The City may also reimburse the owner expenses that were incurred within a 12 month period prior to the date when the City made repairs. The City must have been advised of the remedial work carried out by the owner at the time work was performed, in order for reimbursement of expenses to be considered.
7. This procedure shall apply to gravity sewer laterals only. Privately owned pressurized sewers (forcemains) are not City responsibility.

8. The City shall require an affidavit of evidence and a witnessed release from the property owner before reimbursing for out-of-pocket expenses.

9. **TREE ROOTS IN SEWER LATERALS:**  
The location of the tree, (i.e., on private property or on City property) is not considered. The owner and the City are responsible for repairs to their portion of the sewer lateral.


- a) If the roots are in the lateral on the City side of the property line only, the owner may be reimbursed for the sewer flushing and video work only. (See #6)
- b) If the roots are on the owner's side of the property line, the owner is responsible for all costs incurred.
- c) If the roots are in the lateral on the City side and owner's side of the property line, the cost for the sewer flushing and video only may be shared, if recommended by the Superintendent, and approved by the Manager.



# Save that Grease!!


*Did you know...*  
... that food grease is one of the biggest causes of sewer back-ups  
... if you dump that GREASE down the sink or toilet, it hardens in your sewer pipes and could cause you a flood of sewer water in your house.

**WASTE WATER COLLECTION DIVISION SUGGESTS:**



**TIP #1**

- Use a container (soup can, etc) to pour GREASE or FAT into. When it gets full or turns solid, throw it out with your weekly garbage.



**TIP #2**

- Whenever you have a problem with your sewer or water system in the pipes between your house and the street:

**CALL US FIRST AT WATER & SEWERAGE (506) 658-4455**  
We have someone answering the telephone 24-hours a day, 7 days a week.

The Water & Sewerage Division has a Sewer Back-up Guideline.  
We may be of assistance before you get into trouble!  
For a copy of the Guideline, call us at 658-4455.

Water & Sewerage Services  
175 Rothesay Avenue



City of Saint John

## SEWER LATERAL BACK-UPS

P.O. Box 1971  
Saint John, N.B.  
Canada E2L 4L1

(506) 658-4455  
24-Hour Service