

Village of Palmyra – Sewer Utility

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How exactly does the sewer system work?

A: As you dispose of water from your home, sewage travels through your homes plumbing and out of your home through a sewer lateral. This lateral travels underground and connects to a larger pipe called a sewer main. This sewer main also transports sewage from homes and businesses around your property. At this point, gravity is the driving force behind the transportation and will be until the pipe runs out of pitch. There a lift station will pump sewage “over the hill” until it again can flow by gravity. The wastewater treatment plant is the next destination it will reach. Here the sewage goes through a treatment process to remove debris, sediment, organic and degradable solids and other contaminants. During the summer months of recreational waterway use, the treated water leaving the plant is disinfected to ensure that any potentially harmful bacteria are removed.

Q: What are my responsibilities as a homeowner for my lateral?

A: Homeowners or occupants are responsible for a sewer lateral from the point of connection at the sewer main to and throughout a home or business.

Q: Why do sewer lines back up?

A: There are a variety of reasons sewer lines back up. It could be that there was an improper installation done originally or that a defect or crack has developed in the line over time. Other items that commonly cause backups in private laterals, mains and pumping equipment are roots, rags, cooking grease, diapers, feminine hygiene products and also household cleaning products. Please read the *Notice to Customers* on the Sewer Utility page for more information.

Q: What can I do to help prevent a backup?

A: A good rule of thumb is that only water and human waste should go down the drain. Things like cooking grease and food debris, rags or cloth like materials, diapers, condoms, feminine hygiene products, personal hygiene wipes, cleaning wipes and products, and tissues belong in the trash.

Q: What should I do if I have sewage backing up into my home?

A: First contact the Utility so that we can check the sewer main to ensure there is not a blockage there (Typically main backups affect a larger number of customers and not just isolated to one home). If the main is clear, you should contact a plumber to resolve the issue.

Q: I smell what I think is sewer gas in my basement, what should I do?

A: Typically the smell associated with sewer gas comes from improperly vented plumbing, floor drains or faulty plumbing. Try pouring water down the floor drains to solve the issue. If it doesn't seem to help, you should contact a plumber.

Q: I can't pay my bill in full by the time that it is due, what should I do?

A: Contact the Village Clerk's office and tell them that you need to set up a Deferred Payment Agreement with them for your account. They will be able to set up payment amounts and dates that will allow you to pay off your balance.

Q: I am installing a sump pump and there's no stormwater flow lines nearby, can I just plumb it into my sanitary sewer line?

A: No. Village Ordinance prohibits this and it could be one small piece to a much larger issue. Sump pump discharges risk backups in sanitary sewer mains during large rain events. It also will take up space at the Wastewater Treatment Plant and costs the Sewer Utility money to pump and treat this clear water does not need to be. Sump pumps need to be plumbed outside and directed without causing issues to surrounding properties.

Q: I have a sump pump in my house that I want to discharge right into the stormwater inlet near my house, can I?

A: Yes. Village Ordinance actually requires that sump pump discharges be directed to any existing ditch or stormwater structures, as long as it does not cause harm to surrounding properties. We will require that you coordinate the installation with staff if you plan to alter any Stormwater Utility structures and that you fill out a Road Right of Way Permit for work you will be doing in the road right of way.