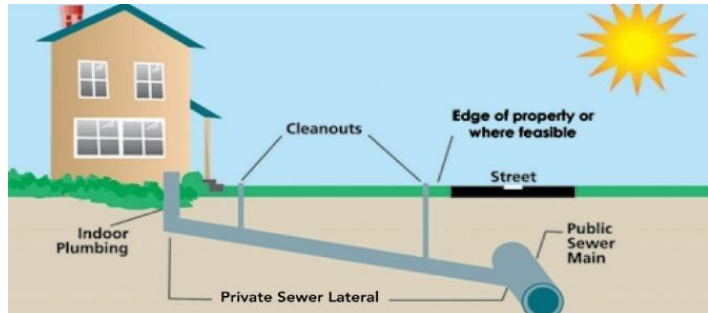


Private Sewer Lateral Program

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is a private sewer lateral?

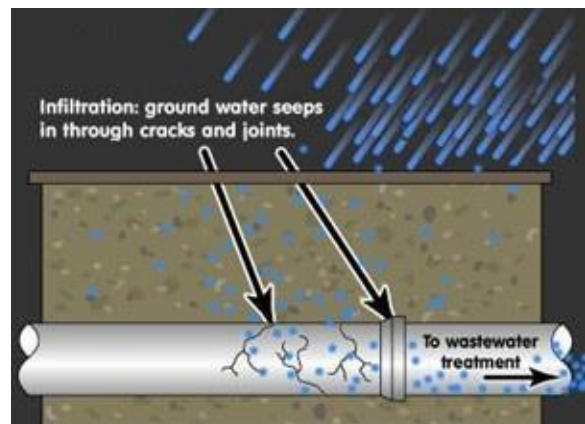
A private sewer lateral is the pipe that connects a building's plumbing system to the City's public sewer main, which is typically located in the street. The sewer lateral begins at the junction with the building's plumbing system, which is typically located within two feet of the building's foundation wall, extends to the public sewer main, and includes the connection to the public sewer main. The property owner is responsible for maintenance and repairs on the entire sewer lateral and the connection to the public sewer main.



2. What is Inflow and Infiltration (I/I)?

Inflow is rainfall that enters private sewer laterals and the City's wastewater collection system through a direct connection, such as a downspout or an area drain. Direct connections are illegal, and the City requires that these connections are removed whenever they are found.

Infiltration is rainfall that enters private sewer laterals and the City's wastewater collection system from the soil surrounding the pipe. During wet weather, rainfall accumulates as groundwater and enters the wastewater collection system in higher levels than in dry weather. In some areas of the City this flow is more than 20 times normal flow. The City is always looking for ways to reduce its I/I levels, and the Private Sewer Lateral program is designed to help reduce infiltration.



3. Why is reducing Inflow and Infiltration so important?

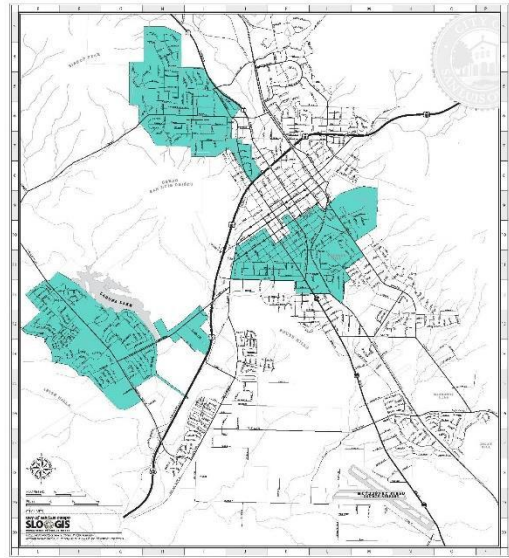
High levels of inflow and infiltration (I/I) can cause Sanitary Sewer Overflows (SSOs) during wet weather. An SSO is when untreated sewage flows out of the collection system before it reaches the City's Water Resource Recovery Facility for treatment.

High I/I levels can also cause unnecessary treatment costs because rainwater is unnecessarily treated when the flow reaches the wastewater treatment plant. This could raise the sewer service rates for all ratepayers if I/I is not mitigated. High levels of I/I are a threat to public health, requires costly upgrades to the wastewater infrastructure, and has, at times, contaminated San Luis Obispo Creek.

4. Does the City have an I/I problem?

According to industry standards, the City has severe levels of I/I. Nationally, a typical Peak Wet Weather Flow (PWWF) to Average Daily Weather Flow (ADWF) ratio above 3.5 is considered high. In San Luis Obispo, collection systems with PWWF-to-ADWF ratios above five are common, and ratios above eight or nine are considered very high. During flow monitoring in 2010 and 2011, consultants found that some areas of the City have a PWWF-to-ADWF ratio of over 13 in some areas during storm events.

Some areas of the City have capacity constraints due to I/I during storm events.



5. What has the City done to reduce I/I?

The City cleans, inspects, repairs, and replaces public sewer mains on a routine basis. Some sewer lines require cleaning as frequently as every two months. City staff have identified significant I/I sources while conducting routine CCTV inspections and worked with residents to correct them.

6. Who are rebates available to?

The Private Sewer Lateral Program provides rebates to single-family residential property owners to defray a portion of the costs in replacing their private sewer lateral. The rebate for any one sewer lateral replacement is a maximum of \$2,000 (up to 50 percent of the cost); \$3,000 (up to 50 percent of the cost) is offered in capacity constrained areas of the City.



7. Why is the City beginning a Private Sewer Lateral Program now?

The City has been concerned about its I/I levels for decades. Through this program, the City is proactively working to reduce I/I levels and SSOs. The City is already working towards this goal by maintaining and monitoring public sewer mains. However, the sewer mains receive their flow from the approximately 145 miles of private sewer laterals that are connected to the City's collection system and are not maintained or monitored by the City. Despite the City's investment into improving the wastewater infrastructure, there has not been a dramatic reduction in I/I during wet weather. This has led the City to conclude that a large portion of its I/I is from sewer laterals.

Over the last decade, the EPA and the California Regional Water Quality Control Board have sued several wastewater agencies to fix their damaged sewer pipes and reduce sanitary sewer overflows. As a result, Private Sewer Lateral Programs have become relatively common throughout California. The City has not been sued by the EPA or California Regional Water Quality Control Board because the number of SSOs is below the California average. The City strives to achieve a zero-tolerance for sewage spills, overflows, and other problems that pose a hazard to public health and the environment.

8. When is a property owner required to have a sewer lateral inspection?

Under the ordinance, events triggering a sewer lateral inspection include:

- a. Private sewer overflow,
- b. Building permit applications for the addition of a bathroom or kitchen in a residential structure,
- c. Building permit applications for the addition of non-residential space or an additional plumbing fixture unit in non-residential structures,
- d. Increase in the size of the domestic water meter serving a property or adding a new domestic water meter,
- e. Specific changes in use,
- f. When a property is subdivided,
- g. When smoke testing or CCTV inspection by the City indicates the presence of I/I from a private sewer lateral impacting the public wastewater collection system.
- h. Change in ownership of real property.

In the ordinance, events “a” through “g” listed above would require corrective action if defects are identified in the private sewer lateral. For event “h,” change of ownership, only the lateral inspection is required (not corrective actions). The disclosure of the condition of the lateral is part of the change in ownership transaction. Any repairs performed would be negotiated between the buyer and seller. The lateral CCTV inspection would be provided to the City. Any repairs performed would be negotiated between the buyer and seller. The lateral CCTV inspection would be provided to the City. The effective date for the new inspection requirements triggered by a change of ownership was **January 1, 2020**.

The Program applies to all residential, commercial, mixed use, industrial, and institutional properties. The ordinance also includes provisions for common interest properties.

9. When would a City property owner not be required to have a sewer lateral inspection?

An inspection **would not** be required if the property meets any of the following conditions:

- a. If the property is less than 20 years old.
 - b. If the property’s sewer lateral was replaced in full within 20 years of January 1, 2020.
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10. How long is the Private Sewer Lateral Inspection valid?

Under ordinance, if the property owner is required to inspect the private sewer lateral, the inspection is valid for **five** years.

11. Is the buyer or the seller be responsible for the sewer lateral compliance?

The current property owner is ultimately responsible for sewer lateral compliance. Under the ordinance, it is up to the buyer and the seller to negotiate this in escrow and provide the CCTV inspection to the City.
