

Sewer Lateral Compliance – Questions and Answers

This brochure is intended to answer the most common questions about the District's regulations regarding sewer laterals.

Q: What is a “sewer lateral?”

A: A “sewer lateral” is that portion of the sanitary sewer line which connects a house's or business' plumbing to the District's sewer system. Typically, most, but not all, of the “sewer lateral” is on private property, while the other portion of the sewer system, the “sewer main,” is usually all in the public right-of-way.

Q: Why is the District concerned about the condition of the sewer lateral?

A: Sewer laterals which are in poor condition present two problems: (1) faulty sewer lines can leak raw sewage in the ground, which may be a public health issue; (2) storm water can invade poorly sealed sewer lines and can overload the sewer system, causing sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs) and backups, and can occasionally overload the wastewater treatment facilities, resulting in the discharge of partially treated wastewater into the Bay.

Q: What are the problems associated with sewer laterals?

A: Most homes in the District were built before 1950, and often have never replaced their original sewer laterals. Over time, these pipelines, generally made of clay, can crack, become disjointed, experience displacement, and/or be subjected to intrusion by roots, all of which can cause leakage and blockage. In addition, some sewer laterals lack the right kind of “cleanouts,” which provides access for clearing blockages.

Q: Whose responsibility is the maintenance of the sewer laterals?

A: In the Stege Sanitary District, as in many other local jurisdictions, the maintenance of the sewer lateral, up to and including the connection to the main, is the responsibility of the private property owner. The District's responsibility is the maintenance of the sewer main.

Q: At what point(s) am I required to repair or replace my sewer lateral?

A: You may voluntarily choose to repair or replace your sewer lateral at any time you feel it is necessary (for example, if you are experiencing frequent sewer backups or blockages). However, the Stege Sanitary District Ordinance Code now requires that non-compliant (i.e., those with defects) sewer laterals be

repaired or replaced when a property is sold – *before the close of escrow.*

Q: Do I absolutely need to have a video made of my sewer?

A: No. The point of a sewer video is to demonstrate that the sewer lateral is in compliance, or to identify specific problems which can be repaired. However, if you elect to replace the entire sewer lateral in accordance with the District requirements, then a video will not be required.

Q: Where do I find a contractor to repair or replace my sewer lateral?

A: The District has a list of plumbing contractors that are registered with the District. If you wish to check a contractor's license, you may do so with the State's Contractors License Board, using their toll free number or Web site. Most of these contractors are also able to make sewer videos.

Q: Why does the District require a test on the repaired or replaced sewer lateral?

A: District staff has determined that an air or water pressure test is the best way to ensure that the line is free of leakage and has been replaced properly.

Q: The sewer lateral on my property has been repaired or replaced and a Certificate of Compliance has been issued. How long is the Certificate good for?

A: District staff has determined that, given the quality of modern sewer pipe technology, Certificates of Compliance will be honored for 10 years. In most cases, therefore, the owner of the property will not be required to obtain another Certificate of Compliance for 10 years, even if the property is sold, or major improvements are made to the house.

The Stege Sanitary District greatly appreciates the cooperation which property owners, contractors, and realtors have extended in helping the District to modernize its sewer system and protect the health and safety of Stege and all its residents.

STEGE SANITARY DISTRICT

Sewer Lateral Compliance:

Questions and Answers
for Property Owners,
Contractors, and Realtors



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