

SEWERS

Responsibilities

The sanitary sewer system for the Town of Dover consists of the main sewer lines, house laterals, connections, and other necessary accessories. The lines are designed to carry off exclusively all liquid house waste discharging sewage into the sanitary sewer system and subsequently into the Rockaway Valley Regional Sewerage Authority (RVRSA) sewer system.



The Town of Dover has 200 miles of sanitary sewer lines in its collection system. The sewer lines are cleaned weekly using our Sewer Jet Vacuum and Rodding equipment.

Most homeowners may not realize that they are responsible for the maintenance and repair of their house or sewer lateral, that is the pipeline between the town sanitary sewer main (which is usually located in the street) and the home. The sewer lateral is owned and maintained by the property owner. The homeowner responsibility includes part of the lateral that extends into the street or public right of way.

Residents are asked to watch what they put into their drains; grease, fats, chemicals, paints, solvents, clothing, paper, plastic, large food pieces, etc. should not be disposed of through the sewer system.

The Town of Dover is not responsible for sewage back-ups in your house. If any part of your home is below the elevation of our sewer main and you have a fixture(s) (e.g., toilet, washing machine, sink, etc.) installed in this area, the Sewer Division recommends/suggests that you have a back pressure valve installed on your sewer pipe, or on the individual fixture(s) located in that area.

There are a number of causes of sewer backups, such as:

- **Combined Pipelines** – Problems arise in systems that combine storm water and raw sewage into the same pipeline. During most rain storms, the systems are exposed to more volume than they can handle, and the result is a sewage backup situation that allows sewage to spew out into basements and other low lying drains.
- **Aging sewer systems** – The American Society of Civil Engineers indicates that the nation's 500,000-plus miles of sewer lines are on average over thirty years old. The increase in the number of homes connected to already aging sewage systems has also contributed to rapid increases in sanitary sewer backups, flooded basements and overflows.
- **Tree Roots** – Seeking moisture, small roots of trees and shrubs make their way into sewer line cracks and service pipe joints, and can cause extensive damage or blockages as they grow larger. The cost of the clean-up will fall to the problem tree's owner. When the issue is a result of a combination of town and private trees, the costs are sometimes split between the town and the property owner.
- **Sanitary Main Blockages** – A blockage can occur in a town sanitary sewer main. If the blockage is not detected in time, sewage from the main can back up into your home through the floor drains. Usually this happens slowly and there are early indications of a problem. If you see seepage at the floor drains, call a licensed plumber to assess the situation and the damage. If water is entering into your basement at a rapid rate, call the Public Works Department and report the problem immediately.

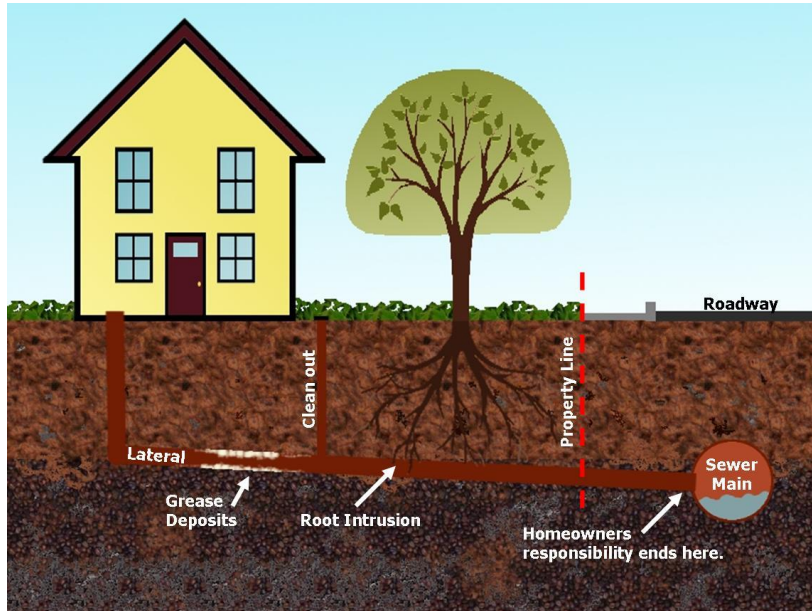
To prevent backups in your sewer lateral and in the town's main:

- **Properly dispose of grease.** Cooking oil should be poured into a heat-resistant container and disposed of properly after it cools off, not in the drain. Washing grease down the drain with hot water is unsatisfactory. As the grease cools off, it will solidify either in the drain, the property owner's line, or in the main sewer causing the line to constrict and eventually clog.
- **Properly dispose of paper products.** Paper towels, disposable diapers, disposable wipes and feminine products do not deteriorate quickly and can cause a great deal of trouble in the property owner's lateral as well as in the town's main.
- **Periodically cut tree roots.** If you have continuing problems with tree roots in your lateral, you may have to regularly have the roots cut by a professional.
- **Replace your line with new plastic pipe.** Plastic pipe will prevent tree roots from entering your line. Replace your line and tap with new plastic pipe.
- **Correct illegal plumbing connections.** Do not connect French drains, sump pumps and other flood control systems to your sanitary sewer. It is illegal to do so, and debris and silt will clog your line. Consult a plumber to correct any pre-existing illegal connections.
- **Install a backwater prevention valve,** which is a fixture installed into a sewer line (and sometimes into a drain line) in the basement of your home to prevent sewer backflows. A properly installed and maintained backwater valve allows sewage to go out, but not to come back in. Be sure to use a qualified plumber.

If you experience a sewer blockage Monday through Friday between 7:00am to 3:30pm, call the Department of Public Works at 973-366-2200 x3129, after business hours and weekends, please call the Dover Police Department at 973-366-0302.

Sewer Description

All homes and businesses connected to sanitary sewer systems have a lateral. It's the pipe that transports water used inside your home out to the town's sanitary sewer system in the street (see image below). Sewer laterals are entirely owned by the private property owner they serve. The private property owner is responsible for maintaining the entire length of the lateral, which includes that portion that may be located within the public right of way (under the asphalt and street landscaping). Maintaining the lateral includes keeping the lateral line flowing and free of debris such as roots and grease.



Sewer Backup Prevention

Sewer backups can cause tremendous damage to the interior of a home. In order to minimize these, the Town of Dover Sewer Department provides continual maintenance services for the public sewer mainlines.

Unfortunately, however, sewer laterals are often not maintained by private property owners until a disaster strikes. "Out of sight, out of mind" is a typical approach to sewer lateral maintenance and operation by many.

To avoid costly repairs and to protect public health and the environment, property owners should have their sewer laterals cleaned regularly. ***Ideally, a lateral should be professionally cleaned once a year to remove built up debris.*** Inspections using a small camera should be conducted by a licensed professional every three to five years to ensure pipe integrity. Check more often if you experience a sewage-like odor or frequent clogged drains.

Access to the lateral pipe is important for cleaning, maintenance and troubleshooting. A cleanout is an access point into the sewer lateral that is used to inspect the line and clear it of any obstruction. Cleanouts are usually located within three to five feet of a business or home, or sometimes at the front property line near the street, and they look like the end of a pipe with a cap on it. A plumber can determine a cleanout's location, its condition and make repairs. The cleanout cap must be on tight at all times except when servicing the lateral.

Click [HERE](#) for the Town of Dover Code - Sewers

