

Things to do to Keep Sewer Lines Clear

The perfect environment for tree roots to grow

Be aware of hidden dangers from your trees. They might be beautiful and add shade to your landscapes but deep down the roots may be damaging your sewer lines.

Sewer lines contain water, nutrients, and oxygen attracting roots that can grow through the cracks and joints of the pipes eventually causing backups and damages that could be very costly.

To help minimize the problem, homeowners should avoid planting certain trees such as poplars, willows, or elms near their sewer laterals. Plant small, slow growing trees that have a less aggressive root system such as Japanese maples or flowering dogwoods. Remember to replace them when they get too large for the area.

Periodic video inspection of the sewer lateral by your plumber will help determine the condition and if any repairs are needed. If there is damage, promptly make repairs, line or replace the lateral as needed.

Keep rainwater out

It is important to keep rainwater out of sewer lines.

The sewer system is designed to hold a certain capacity of domestic wastewater flow. When rainwater enters the sewer line it will overwhelm the system and cause sewer spills.

To prevent this from happening, follow these tips:

Inspect your rain gutters and make sure the downspout is NOT connected to the sewer line. Direct it either to the lawn and/or storm drain system.

Look for and check your sewer cleanout. Make sure the cap to the cleanout pipe is not missing and/or damaged.

Check to see that the outdoor patio, deck, or yard drains are not connected to the sewer.

Make sure that the pool or pond overflow drains is not connected to the sewer.

It is illegal to have these drains connected to the sewer line. Such connections will be fined.



Most common causes of overflows are Fat, Oil, and Grease (FOG)

The most common cause of sewer overflows is from the accumulation of FOG in the sewer system. FOG is a byproduct of cooking, most commonly found in meat fats, lard, cooking oil, shortening, butter, margarine, food scraps, baking goods, sauces, dairy products, etc. These products harden and stick to the inside of the sewer pipes (both on your property and under the streets) building up and eventually causing a blockage in the sewer pipe.



To prevent any build up in the sewer pipes, **DO NOT** pour the above-mentioned products down the sink or toilet.

Paper towel or any absorbent materials should be use to absorb or wipe off excess FOG from pots, pans, plates, etc. before placing them in the sink. Meat scraps, coffee grounds, eggshells, and other solid foods should be put in the trashcan and **NOT** in the garbage disposal. Rinse your dirty rags and shoes outside and not in the sink. Keep disposable diapers, Q-tips, Kleenex, dental floss, etc., out of the sewer to help keep it clean and clear.

If you would like to learn more, please visit our web site <http://dpw.lacounty.gov>

If you see an overflow, please call our help line immediately!!



“We provide sewer maintenance services to protect the public and the environment in a highly-efficient, effective, and responsive manner.”