

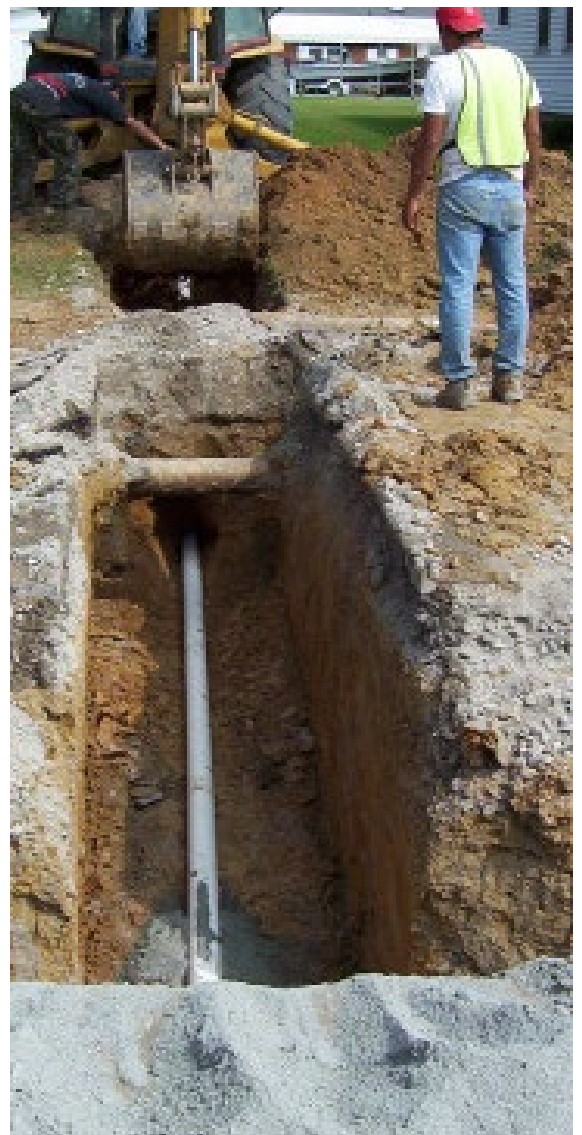


**CITY OF ASTORIA**  
Founded 1811 • Incorporated 1856

# LATERAL REPAIRS



In the City of Astoria, the Public Works Department manages the public sanitary sewer conveyance and treatment system. Homes and businesses are connected to the public system with private plumbing, known as private laterals. A properly operating lateral requires very little maintenance; however, backups do sometimes occur. When a backup or blockage occurs in private plumbing, an inspection of the system will help determine how to repair the problem.



## Preventing Sewer Backups:

- **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 (and cloth) diapers, hygienic 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 city 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 connection with new plastic pipe.
- **Connection of storm drainage:** Connect storm drainage from sources such as french drains, sump pumps, roof drains, and other groundwater control systems to a storm drainage facility. This storm drainage can be directed to a curb/gutter, storm drainage pipe, catch basin or manhole. Coordinate with the City to determine the best available option.
- **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 or business to prevent sewer backflows. A properly installed and maintained backwater prevention valve allows sewage to go out, but not to come back in. Be sure to use a qualified plumber.

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## What to do if your sewer backs up:

- Check to see if the backup is affecting the entire building, or just isolated drains or fixtures.
- If the problem is isolated, the problem may be remedied using a drain snake. A homeowner may choose to do this work, or hire a private plumber.
- If a drain snake does not fix the problem, the plumber may try to identify and resolve the blockage by accessing the system using a fixture or the cleanout.
- If the problem persists, the plumber may video the inside of the lateral to identify the problem.
- If the lateral requires significant work, it may be necessary for the plumber to get a plumbing permit, a grading & erosion control permit and request utility locates before they make the repair.
- If the defect is structural and within the right of way, additional permits may be needed for the repair including a Right-of-way permit and/or a Temporary Street Use permit.
- If there is significant volume or continuous flow of sewage, contact the City of Astoria's Public Works Operations Division. Typically, if only a small volume of flow occurs or the source is from an upper level of the structure, the problem is probably a private plumbing issue. You should contact a licensed plumbing professional for assistance.

Upon notification of sewage backup, the City of Astoria will take the following actions:

- Respond to the scene and investigate the situation.
- Provide information to the affected customer on the responsibility for removal of blockage and/or repair of the pipe.

## How do you recognize a sewer backup?

You may not always recognize signs of a potential sewer backup until it's too late — but contact a plumber right away if you notice:

- Seepage at basement floor drains
- A foul smell coming from your drains
- Toilets aren't flushing like they should, and plunging doesn't help
- More than one drain in your house is clogged
- When you use one piece of plumbing (like a toilet), water backs up somewhere else
- Bubbling after you flush a toilet or when a sink is trying to drain (and it happens more than once)

All of these may be signs that a sewer backup is brewing. If you notice sewage flowing into your drains, toilets, bathtubs, or showers, it's probably safe to say a sewer backup is already coming on in full force. Either way, your best bet is to stop using your water, turn off your home's main water supply, and contact a plumber right away.



## Resources:

- Astoria Public Works Operations Division:  
Business Hours: 503.325.3524  
After Hours Emergency: 503.325.4411
- Request a Plumbing Permit:  
Contact the Building Division at 503.338.5183
- Locate Utilities: Call 811 or visit [digsafelyoregon.com](http://digsafelyoregon.com)
- Request a Grading & Erosion Control and/or Right-of-way Permit: Contact the Engineering Division at 503.338.5173
- Request a Temporary Street Use permit:  
Contact Public Works Administration at 503.338.5177