

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS A SANITARY SEWER LATERAL?

A sanitary sewer lateral connects a building to the municipal sewer main. The sanitary sewer lateral is considered part of the house, and as such, is maintained by the property owner.

WHAT DO SANITARY SEWER LATERALS DO?

The sewer laterals are integral parts of the sanitary sewer system. They carry away all waste from your home (bathrooms, kitchens, showers, etc.) to the public sanitary sewer main.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR MAINTENANCE?

The building lateral is considered part of the home. Maintenance, repair, and replacement of the lateral is the responsibility of the homeowner. Performing regular maintenance and making necessary repairs is vital to ensuring the longevity of your lateral, similar to other home upkeep. Most can be cleaned by accessing the sanitary sewer cleanout.

WHAT IS A SANITARY SEWER CLEANOUT?

A sewer cleanout is a point of access where the sewer lateral can be serviced. It usually is 4 inches in diameter and has a tight-fitting steel or plastic cap over it. If you are unsuccessful in locating one, you either do not have one or it may be buried under dirt or concrete. A plumber can assist you in locating it.

I'VE HAD BASEMENT BACKUPS, WHY?

The main reason for basement backups is the presence of excess water in the system. During rainfall, saturated ground conditions encourage seepage into the sewers. Rainwater finds its way into the sewers through many cracks and defects in the system. If enough excess water makes it into the sewers, pipe capacities are exceeded and basement backups can occur.

What are some direct Inflow Sources?

- Direct Roof Downspout Connection
- Uncapped cleanout
- Storm sewer cross-connection
- Foundation drain connection

What are some direct infiltration Sources?

- Root Intrusion into mains or laterals
- Cracked or broken mains or laterals
- Defective manholes or cleanouts
- Defective lateral connections

WHY IS THIS AN ISSUE NOW?

Rain water entering the sanitary system has always been a cause for concern, but the unusually high amounts of rain in recent years have put a strain on the area's infrastructure. Think of your sewer lateral like your water heater. They both perform a function that you use in everyday life, but are often unseen. It isn't until these systems are not operating correctly that we consider their importance.

WHY REPAIR THE LATERAL?

The Village has had an on-going sewer main video inspection and rehabilitation program for several years as part of our effort to maintain our public infrastructure in good service condition. We are also aware that needed maintenance on private laterals may not have taken place at the same rate as the public infrastructure. Repairing laterals is considered as part of overall system upkeep to ensure on-going acceptable sewer service levels in our Village.

HOW IS MMSD INVOLVED?

Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) has set aside dedicated funds for each municipality to investigate and correct inflow and infiltration that originates from private laterals. River Hills is using these funds to conduct the present investigation. In addition, in case defects are identified, the Village will use MMSD funds to participate in the repairs and rehabilitation of the lateral by funding the cost to repair up to 50 feet of a private lateral found to be defective.