



LATERAL REPAIRS



Preventing sewer backups

Many blockages can be prevented by placing wipes, paper towels, cooking grease and other household waste in the garbage, not the sink or toilet.

These simple steps help keep plumbing and the sewer system operating properly, and can prevent costly and time-consuming repairs.

In the City of Forest Grove, the Public Works Department manages the public sanitary sewer conveyance system in partnership with Clean Water Services, which manages the sanitary sewer 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.

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 and erosion control permit, and request utility locates before they make the repair.
- If the defect is structural and within the right of way, the City of Forest Grove may be able to help. The plumber, homeowner or a realtor can submit a video to the City's Public Works Department to request assistance.



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How can The City of Forest Grove help?

The City conducts preventive maintenance of the public system, including the mainline in the street.

The City also makes repairs to structural defects in laterals that occur within the public right of way. Structural defects include:

- Cracked, broken or crushed pipe.
- Open or offset joints.
- Root intrusion.
- Other imperfections in a lateral that may allow surface water or groundwater to enter the sanitary sewer system.

A sag or inconsistent grade in the lateral, also known as a “belly,” is *not* a structural defect. If a private homeowner, plumber, or realtor believes that a defect is the responsibility of the City of Forest Grove, they can submit a video to the City to request assistance. City staff will review the video, and may even take a second video to evaluate a request. City staff will keep the requester informed on the status of the video submittal and any required repairs.

Resources

- City of Forest Grove Public Works: 503.992.3258
- Request a free “Freeze the Grease, Save the Drain” kit: 503.681.3678
- Print your own “Wipes Clog Pipes” sign: cleanwaterservices.org/wipes.
- Request a plumbing permit: Contact the City of Forest Grove Building Division: 503.992.3229
- Locate utilities: Call 811 or visit digsafelyoregon.com
- Request an erosion control permit: Contact the City of Forest Grove Building Division: 503.992.3229



Forest Grove is a friendly, twenty-first century, small, full service city: A destination that thrives by design and is our home.



A place where families and businesses thrive.

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