



CITY OF EL CAJON

Private Sewer Lateral Inspection Program Administrative Guidelines

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DEFINITIONS:

City Encroachment Permit: is a permit issued by the City's Public Works Department for work within the public right-of-way usually 10 to 12 feet from the face of street curb. For excavations in the street between the curbs or edge of pavement, a qualified Class A, or C-42 contractor license is required.

Building Sewer: is the wastewater pipe that conveys wastewater or sewage beginning at the outside of the building and terminates at the public sewer main including the service connection to the main. The building sewer includes the lower lateral. Maintenance of the building sewer is the responsibility of the property owner (ECMC 13.20.010).

Double Cleanout: is a pipeline fitting that allows access for pipeline maintenance in either direction in accordance with the City's approved detail on file with the City and is installed at the edge of the public right-of-way where the building sewer connects to the lower sewer lateral.

Pre-Qualified Plumbing Contractor: is a contractor that has complied with the City's pre-qualification process and possesses a California Contractors license in one of the following disciplines:

A-General engineering contractor

C-36 Plumbing contractor

C-34 Pipeline contractor

C-42 Sanitary system contractor

Sanitary Sewer Overflow (SSO): SSO or sewer spill is any occurrence where sewage or wastewater escapes confinement in a sewer main, sewer lateral, building sewer, leach lines or septic tank and reaches the surface of the ground and is not fully recovered and returned to a proper disposal device.

Sewer Back-Up: Sewer back-up is a blockage of a sewage disposal device causing the disposal device to malfunction and not pass or process the sanitary waste or wastewater that in turn forces flow to pond or escape into a building but does not escape to the exterior of the building.

Sewer Lateral: is the lower part of the building sewer that lies within the public right-of-way, easement or street.

SECTION I – WHEN INSPECTION IS REQUIRED

This section explains when inspection is required; outlines the administrative process used to

notify property owners of inspection requirements; and details the timeline for compliance.

A. **Health And Safety Inspections (ECMC13.37.040 (A))** – A building sewer video inspection will be required under the following circumstances:

- A spill from a private sewer lateral; and/or
 - Observerable lateral problems (visible roots or grease in the line, failed service connection to the mainline) during inspection of City lines; and/or
 - Potential problems noted during smoke testing (smoke emitting from the ground or connection of outdoor drain).
 - Every ten years for all properties other than single family residential.
1. When the City determines that a building sewer requires a health and safety inspection the property owner will be notified that a defect has been identified, and a diagnostic video inspection will be required.
 2. When any property experiences a spill it is subject to a citation and a health and safety inspection. As a minimum the property owner will be required to perform a diagnostic video of the entire building sewer and lower lateral.
 3. When a diagnostic video inspection is required, the City will provide the owner a list of pre-qualified video inspection contractors. The property owner is obligated to make separate arrangements with a pre-qualified inspection business to perform the work at the owner's expense.
 4. Following review of the video the City may issue a Notice to Repair. The owner may be required to obtain a plumbing permit and or an encroachment permit to complete the repairs. Following completion of the repairs the plumbing contractor must submit a repair report and certification and provide a post repair video inspection for review by the City.
 5. If certified Private Lateral Inspection and Repair Report form completed by the plumbing contractor is not submitted within 30 days following issuance of a Notice to Repair, a second letter will be sent to the property owner directing that the inspection and/or repair be completed within 15 days and notifying the property owner that failure to complete the certified inspection within the designated time frame will result in the issuance of an Administrative Citation.
 6. If inspection and/or repairs is not completed and/or required certification forms are not submitted within the required time, a Notice of Administrative Citation will be issued together with direction to complete the required inspection within 10 days of the date of the notice or face an additional Administrative Penalty of \$200, and referral to the City Attorney's office for enforcement.

Nothing in the above guidelines shall prevent the City from requiring a more timely (or immediate) response if the sewer lateral is causing an on-going threat to public health or safety.

B. Inspections for Building Remodels (ECMC 13.37.040 (B)):

1. Inspections are required for any building remodel exceeding 400 square feet or with the addition of one more fixture units as determined by the Building Official.
 - a. Applicants will be notified of the requirement to submit a sewer lateral inspection video and inspection form by Community Development staff at the time that they submit plans for Community Development review.
 - b. The property will be “flagged” in the computerized permit monitoring system.
 - c. The property owner or owners agent will be required to make arrangements with a pre-qualified video inspection contractor to have the line inspected.
 - d. Public Works staff will review the video and issue either a “Compliance Certificate” or Notice of Repair.
 - e. In those cases where a Notice to Repair is issued, the owner or plumbing contractor may have to apply for a plumbing permit with the Building Department.
 - f. The plumbing contractor shall make the repairs, complete repair certification form, and post repair video inspection as outlined in (A) above. All work will require a plumbing permit and inspection prior to issuance of “Compliance Certificate
 - g. The City will issue a Compliance Certificate following approval of the repairs.

C. Inspection Of Non-Residential Properties, Condominiums And Other Common Interest Developments (ECMC 13.37.040 (C))

1. Non-Residential, Commercial properties and common interest developments are required to inspect their laterals once every ten (10) years.
 - a. Public Works staff will identify the APN numbers and accompanying addresses for the owners of all properties requiring sewer lateral inspections.
 - b. Notices will be sent on a rotating schedule to the property address and listed property owner along with a list of pre-qualified video inspection companies. If a property management company is on record for the site, they will also be provided with a notice. Notices will advise the property owner that a sewer lateral inspection must be completed, and proper documentation submitted to the City within 90 days of the date of the notice.
 - c. If no inspection occurs within the required time, a second notice will be sent requiring inspection within 30 days of the date of the notice, and advising that failure to complete the required inspection will result in the issuance of an Administrative Citation and penalties.
 - d. If the inspection is not conducted and/or required forms are not submitted within the required time, a Notice of Administrative Citation will be issued together with direction to complete the required inspection within 10 days of the date of the notice or face an fines and penalties, and referral to the City Attorney's office for enforcement.

D. Exemptions – Sewer Lateral Inspections Will Not Be Required Under The Following Conditions (13.37.040 (D).):

1. The Property owner submits documents showing that the sewer line has been installed within 10 years of the current date, and proper documents can be produced to show that the line was installed in accordance with codes and inspected. Proof of either a Building Permit or Public Works Encroachment Permit shall be required.
2. The sewer line has been inspected or repaired within 10 years of the current date and the property owner can produce a copy of the “Compliance Certificate” showing that inspection and/or repairs were completed.

SECTION II – QUALIFIED VIDEO INSPECTION BUSINESSES

ECMC Section 13.37.050 requires that all certified inspection/repair reports should be prepared by pre-qualified contractors, who hold an appropriate license for the type of work being performed and possessing a current El Cajon Business License. Plumbing contractors must have a California contractor’s license. Companies who perform video inspection only, must be pre-qualified.

A. Pre-Qualification Program

Licensed plumbers and video inspection businesses (qualified contractors) will be required to attend a City of El Cajon Training Program. The certification program will be offered on a regular basis. The content of the certification program will include:

1. Review of the scope and intent of the City's Sewer Lateral Inspection Program;
2. Review of the City's standard inspection form (Exhibit A);
3. Direction on how to complete the Forms;
4. Specifications for the video inspection, including the requirements for speed of travel of the camera in the lateral, and quality requirements (Exhibit B);
5. Direction on what is expected of video inspection businesses to ensure outdoor storm drains, yard drains, or roof drains are not connected to sewer; and
6. Direction on checking for backwater valve or need thereof
7. Types of lateral defects and expected repairs

B. Other Requirements

1. Pre-qualified contractors must have a current, valid El Cajon business license.
2. Video inspection businesses will have to sign an agreement to abide by the standards of inspection.
3. Licensed Plumbers wishing to be pre-qualified must agree to abide by the expected standards of repair.

4. Certified inspection or repair reports will be randomly reviewed for conformance with the program and any observed deficiencies will be investigated. Inspection and subsequent repair recommendations that violate the intent of the program will be grounds for removal from the pre-qualified contracting list.
5. Non-pre-qualified plumbers will be permitted to perform repairs, but inspection videos and repair reports will be reviewed for conformance with the program for an additional \$200 plus the cost of any required plumbing permits.
6. Any overflows or sewage spills that reach the surface resulting from a blocked building sewer or lateral are a public health hazard. It is California State Law to report all spills. The El Cajon Municipal code makes it the responsibility of all citizens to report a spill when observed.

SECTION III – CITY PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING SPILLS AND MANAGING INSPECTION SUBMITTALS

A. REPORTING and SUBMITTAL of DOCUMENTS

1. ***Inspections following a response to a blocked building sewer that has resulted in an overflow or escape of wastewater to the surface.*** The responding plumber or responsible party shall make a telephonic report of the spill. **It is a violation of law to not report a spill or overflow.** The State of California requires that all spills that reach a storm drain be reported within 24 hours. Use the form contained in appendix D to record and report the needed information. File the completed form with the video inspection records with El Cajon Public Works Department.
 - a. All Overflows are to be telephonically reported as follows:
 1. **Spills that Reach a Storm Drain**, call the 24 hour pager for immediate assistance (619) 785-8936
 2. For all other spills make a telephonic report the Public Works 24-hr line including weekends and holidays: call (619) 441-1658 and leave a message during non-business hours.
 - b. Complete a spill report form and submit it with the Video inspection report required below. In cases where a spill has occurred the building sewer must be video inspected by a pre-qualified contractor.
 - c. The pre-qualified video inspection contractor shall submit a copy of the Certified Inspection Form (Exhibit A) together with the DVD video or MP\$ formatted video of the subject sewer lateral for City review along with any repair recommendations.
 - d. Documents may be delivered in person between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. or sent by mail. Documents sent by mail should be addressed to the Lateral Inspection coordinator.
 - e. Documents shall be submitted to the address below:

Public Works Counter
200 Civic Center Way, 4th floor
El Cajon, CA 92020

- f. All forms will be stamped with the date they were received.
- g. Incomplete forms, unsigned forms, or poor quality videos will be returned to the property owner as incomplete.
2. Any occurrence of a blocked or malfunctioning building sewer that does not cause a spill does not require reporting.
3. In cases where the City has issued an ORDER TO REPAIR and final inspection by the building official has been completed, the plumbing contractor shall post repair inspection video.

B. Review Of Documents

1. City staff will review video inspections and forms within five working days of receipt. For pre-qualified contractors there will be no charge for review. There will be a \$200 review fee contractors that are not pre-qualified.
2. If repairs are performed, post-repair video must be submitted along with the Certification of Repair.
3. On approval of the submittal, the City will Issue a “Compliance Certificate.”
4. The “Compliance Certificate” will be good for 10 years from the date of issuance.
5. Certified reports that are disapproved will be returned to the property owner’s representative detailing further requirements.

C. Issuance Of “Compliance Certificates”

1. The City will issue a standard Sewer Lateral “Compliance Certificate” for compliant laterals.
2. All notices will be sent to the property owner on file with the County Assessor's office and to the property address.
3. The City's lateral tracking system will be updated to reflect that an inspection has been completed and the line is in compliance.

D. Issuance Of Notice of Repair

1. Following review of diagnostic video inspections, laterals requiring repairs will be issued a Notice To Repair. The Notice To Repair will specify the date by which repairs must be completed (typically 30 days unless there are extenuating circumstances) as well as the documents needed to verify repair. A Notice To Repair is included as Exhibit C.
2. All notices will be sent to the owner on file with the County Assessor's office and to the property address.
3. Appeals of the Notice To Repair must be made in writing to the Public Works Director within 15 calendar days from the date of notice.
4. The Public Works Department will review the relevant documents and respond to the applicant within five business days.

E. Proof Of Repair

1. Where repairs are required, a completed Building Permit and/or Public Works Encroachment Permit indicating that the work has been performed and inspected will be the acceptable proof of repair. In cases where a permit is not required the post repair video will be basis for determining completion.
2. The contractor performing the work must also submit a certified inspection and/or repair report to the Department of Public Works.
3. Public Works or Building and Safety staff will update the permit tracking system to show that the lateral was repaired and/or replaced.
4. Following acceptance of the repairs the City will issue a Compliance Certificate.

Exhibits

- A. Inspection/Repair Report Form
- B. Sample "Notice To Repair Form"
- C. Private Sewer Spill Report Form
- D. Sample "Compliance Certificate"



EXHIBIT A

PRIVATE SEWER LATERAL INSPECTION AND REPAIR REPORT

Customer Name: _____ Address: _____ Phone: _____

Company Name: _____ Inspector's Name: _____ Phone: _____

Sewer Usage: Residential Commercial Condo/Apt Pipe Size: _____ Pipe Material: _____

CCTV Date: _____ Time: _____ Camera Direction: With Flow __ Against Flow __ Total Length: _____

- Cleanout is accessible outside of building.
- There is a sewer ejector pump at this property.
- Private sewer lateral crosses neighboring private property.
- Private sewer lateral connects to City sewer in public right of way.
- There is more than one structure at this address served by the private sewer lateral. Property has been verified as not requiring a backwater valve.
- Property has been verified as having a working backwater valve.
- Property needs a backwater valve.
- Property has been verified as having no outside surface drains (rainwater runoff) connected to the sewer system.

I recommend the following repairs to restore normal lateral function:

Recommended repairs have been made (*enclose a copy of the repair authorization, contract or invoice signed by the property owner*)

Lateral has been re-inspected to verify repairs

I certify that the information, recommended repairs and video recording I have provided with this form are true and correct:

Video Technician's signature: _____ Date: _____

The information submitted herewith complies with all requirements set forth by the City of El Cajon Municipal Code 14.46 inclusive. I declare under penalty of perjury that all information submitted here applies to the listed address only:

Plumber's signature: _____ Date: _____ License # _____

*Forms available on line at [_____](#)

Copies to: Public Works Owner/Site Address

Required enclosures:

1. Repair Authorization
2. DVD video inspection and re-inspection following repairs if needed
3. Completed Inspection Log. Note any observations using the observation codes
4. Sketch of lateral, lot, and building with dimensions referenced to front curb or edge of pavement and side property lines where possible. If inspection is a long lateral note spacing of cleanouts and entry locations for insertion of camera.

EXHIBIT B



CITY OF EL CAJON Sample Notice To Repair

Date
Mr./Ms.
Street address
El Cajon, CA 920XX

**SUBJECT: NOTICE TO REPAIR SEWER
LATERAL**

STREET ADDRESS: [REDACTED]
APN: [REDACTED]

Dear :

The purpose of this letter is to inform you, as the owner of the subject address, located at (Street Address) that your sewer lateral is in need of repair or replacement.

On (Date), the Public Works Department received your submission of the Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) inspection report and videotape of your Sewer Lateral. Wastewater Collection staff reviewed the documents and found defects as noted on the attached inspection report.

The El Cajon Municipal Code requires that sewer laterals must be in good working order. You are hereby directed to:

- Contact a licensed plumbing/drain cleaning company to repair and/or replace a deteriorated section of your Sewer Lateral plumbing system.

In addition, it is advised that you:

- Institute a periodic preventive maintenance-cleaning program to prevent future problems with your Sewer Lateral.

All necessary repair work must be completed by (Date).

Please note that certain repairs, if needed, require a permit. Permits can be obtained at 200 Civic Center Way, between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Please contact a licensed plumbing company for further information regarding required

Exhibit C Guidelines-Private Building Sewer Inspection Program

permits. The City maintains a list of pre-qualified plumbers. If a pre-qualified plumber is used there will be no charge for video reviews. If a plumbing contractor is used and not pre-qualified there will be a \$200 fee assessed for review of the Plumbers video inspection and a plumbing permit fee.

Permits for repairs on private property are obtained through the building department. If work is needed in the public right-of-way a Public Works Encroachment permit must also be obtained.

Please contact David Keltner, Sewer Lateral Coordinator, at (619) 441-1510, when you have completed the required repair work and obtain a “Compliance Certificate” as proof that the work has been performed. The “Compliance Certificate” is valid for 10 years and not re-inspection will be required during that time. Please also feel free to contact _____ if you have any questions about the City's sewer maintenance program.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation to resolve this matter. Protection of the environment by maintaining your private sewer lateral to prevent blockages and sewage spills is a high priority of the City of El Cajon.

Sincerely,

Sewer Lateral Coordinator

cc: Dennis Davies, Deputy Director of Public Works

EXHIBIT C



**CITY OF EL CAJON
PRIVATE SEWER SPILL REPORT**

Notice: It's your obligation and the law to report sewer spills. Please complete this form and mail or fax to:

Sewer Lateral Coordinator
City of El Cajon
Public Works Department
200 Civic Center Way
El Cajon, CA 92020

Or fax to:
619-579-5254
Attn: Sewer Lateral Coordinator

1. Estimated spill volume: _____ Gallons
2. How much was recovered and returned to sewer? _____
3. Did the spill reach a drainage channel of surface water? Yes No
4. Did the spill reach the street and inter a storm drain pipe or inlet? Yes No
5. If the spill reached a storm drain were you able to recover the leakage and return it to the sewer?
 Yes No If no, how much was returned? _____
6. Did the spill occur on private property? _____
7. Name and telephone number of responsible party:
 - a. Name: _____
 - b. Telephone Number: _____
 - c. Street Address: _____
 - d. City: _____ Zip Code: _____

EXHIBIT D



CITY OF EL CAJON

SAMPLE COMPLIANCE CERTIFICATE

STREET ADDRESS: _____

APN NO. ____ - ____ - ____

The above noted property has completed a building sewer and lateral repair in accordance with City of El Cajon Municipal Code ECMC 13.37.

The property will not be required to perform any health and safety inspections of the building sewer for a period not to exceed ten (10) years from the date of filing of this notice with the County Clerk of San Diego County unless evidence shows that the building sewer is not functioning properly, has failed, or qualifies as a public nuisance.

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS, CITY OF EL CAJON