2009 NEW PRIVATE BUILDING SEWER REGULATIONS

Effective July 1, 2009 all property owners in the City of El Cajon are required to complete a video inspection of their private building sewer from the building cleanout to the main connection in the street at the occurrence of any of the following:

i. At any occurrence of a sewage spill
ii. Evidence that the sewer lateral has not been properly maintained
iii. Existence of a public health threat
iv. Addition of new plumbing fixtures
v. Addition of 400 or more square feet of floor area

If the property is a food-serving establishment the installation of a grease interceptor may also be required.

Video inspections are to be completed in accordance with the City's guidelines by a licensed contractor preferably from the City's pre-qualified contractors list. The Guidelines and list of pre-qualified contractors can be obtained on the City's website at :

http://www.ci.el-cajon.ca.us/dept/works/PrivateBuildingSewerInspections.html

The City charges a fee ($200) for review of video inspections but the fee is waived if the property owner uses a pre-qualified contractor from the City's list.

If the property owner experiences a sewage spill then any citizen or plumbing contractor who has knowledge of the spill is required to make a telephonic report to a 24-hour phone line and in some cases the report must be made within 2-hours. It is a violation of law to not report a spill.

For purposes of reporting and complying with video inspection requirements a spill is considered a leakage of sewage or wastewater to the surface of the ground that is not fully recovered and is returned to the sewer system. Typically a small leakage of sewage will occur if a plumber opens a trap to break a blockage but if the plumber is able to collect the leakage and return it to the sewer is not considered a spill.

If a property experiences a plumbing backup and it leaks from the building sewer into the surrounding property and it doesn't escape and is recovered and returned to the sewer it is not a spill. If the leakage exits the property it is a spill.

The best way to avoid a spill is to have your lateral inspected voluntarily on a periodic basis as part of a regular maintenance program. It is the property owner's responsibility to maintain the building sewer from the building to the main in the street, alley, or sewer easement.

Backups and spills are usually caused by avoidable problems. The usual causes of spills and backups are root intrusion, grease, old worn out pipes and solid objects that have no business in a sewer such as rags, disposable diapers, sanitary wipes, sanitary napkins, green waste, egg shells, and coffee grounds.

If a video inspection reveals a pipeline defect the property is subject to a mandatory "Notice to Repair" and it is the property owners responsibility to repair the pipe and have the pipeline re-inspected to confirm that repairs have been made and the pipeline is in good working order.

Additional information concerning procedures for pipeline inspection or repair is contained in the guidelines. If you have any questions contact the City's Lateral Coordinator at (619) 441-1510.