

INFORMATION EVERY HOMEOWNER NEEDS TO KNOW

Laterals

A lateral is the pipe that connects your house to the main sewer pipe under the street.

All Noblesville homeowners are responsible for the maintenance and care of their lateral all the way to the main line connection.

Here are some tips to help you maintain your lateral:

- Do not plant trees near your lateral. The roots push their way through the tiniest joints or cracks and thrive inside the piping causing backups, blockages, and larger cracks.
- Do not allow anything down your house drains that is not dispersible, such as wipes, grease, rags, cleaning sponges, dog toys, etc. All of these items cause blockages.

Lift Stations

To convey the sewage from homes to the treatment plant, pipes are laid out with a slight slope for gravity to force it along. At a certain point, the depth can no longer use gravity and a pump is needed to lift that flow up to a level that allows gravity to take over once again. These pumps are housed deep underground in a structure like a manhole with electrical panels above ground to run those pumps. Lift stations are checked weekly and have alarm systems that notify operators of any problems.

Flushable versus Dispersible

Flushable means that the product will fit down the toilet piping. By that definition, nuts, bolts and matchbox size cars are flushable, but most people know not to flush those items.

Dispersible means that the product dissolves into a cloud of fibers so it becomes part of the water flow. Toilet paper is the only dispersible product on the market. Flushable wipes, personal towels, disposable toilet scrubbers and feminine hygiene products are not dispersible. These items entangle, cause clogs, backups and damage pumps in the sewer system. There are ordinances and lawsuits across the country against these so called "flushable" products because of the damage they cause to laterals and sewer systems in general.

Illegal Connections

Before an area of town is developed, sewer sizes of those pipes are engineered for full build out of the homes and calculations are used for population use. There are many reasons to not undersize or oversize those pipes and that is why it is so important that only the sanitary, or dirty water, flows through those pipes. Clear water from downspouts and sump pumps does not need to be treated and can be a very helpful resource to the homeowner.

When clear water takes up the pipe space during rain events, it could cause sanitary flow to be forced out of manholes or even back into other homes. It is illegal to connect clear water of any sort to lateral and main line pipes, because it takes up the space needed for the sanitary waste to be conveyed to the treatment plant, causes excess wear on pumps at lift stations, excess flow through the treatment plant, which all involve costs that are passed down to the users of the systems. City ordinances also allow for fines to be charged to the property owners responsible for the illegal connections and for those connections to be removed at the property owner's expense.

Sewer Line Maintenance

There are over 500 miles of sewer pipes in the City of Noblesville that are required to be cleaned on a ten year cycle. We accomplish this with large trucks that insert hoses with special nozzles into manholes that jet high pressure water through those lines. This is important to ensure everything is flowing properly. We have to have access to all of our manhole structures and that is why it is against City ordinance to cover manholes with mulch beds, landscaping, sod, etc. We employ a manhole crew that have to uncover buried manholes and sometimes raise them up to the proper ground level for access.

