

ROSSBURN MUNICIPALITY
POLICY & PROCEDURES MANUAL

<i>Reference</i> Utility Services	<i>Classification</i> Policy 2015-33B
<i>Subject</i> SEWER BACKUP POLICY	<i>Pages</i>
<i>Authority</i> Council	<i>Effective Date</i> November 10, 2020
<i>Approved</i> Resolution # 2020-402	<i>Index</i> Replaces 2015-33A

POLICY STATEMENT: The following Policy deals with the sewer lines into private residences and businesses.

The Municipality's ownership of the wastewater collection and treatment system in the Town of Rossburn and its responsibility to protect the health and welfare of the system users require the municipality to assure that blockages in sewer service lines are cleared.

1. Private Portion of the Service Line

The sewer service line is the line that connects the municipal main sewer line to the residence or business. The property owner is solely responsible for the portion of the service line from the residence or business up to the property line, defined as the private portion. As the property line often cannot be definitively determined without a survey, for this policy a five-foot buffer around the property line shall be used by the Municipality to determine the property line. Responsibility for the private portion of the service line includes the following: installation of the line, connection of the service line at the home and property line, line repairs and maintenance, line clean-out and cap, and clearing of blockages.

It is the responsibility of each property owner who has a structure connected to the municipal wastewater treatment system to make sure the sewer service line is installed properly and is maintained in proper working condition. Property owners are responsible for installation of back water valves and other devices that may be required when plumbing appurtenances on the property are installed lower than existing sewage mains and subject to flooding during high flow periods or when a blockage exists in the sewer main line.

2. Municipal Portion of the Service Line

The Rossburn Municipality is responsible for the service line from the property line to the sewer main line. However, should the in-line blockage or line repair be caused by the property owner



then cleared line and repair costs are the responsibility of the property owner as detailed in section in Section 4 below.

3. Property Owner Sewer Issues

If a property owner is experiencing issues with their sewer service, the property owner (renter or agent) would contact a plumber to check the sewer service to determine the nature and type of blockage. If the property owner first contacts the Municipality, they are directed to contact a plumber to determine the issue. The Municipality will then also check the sewer main servicing the affected property to ensure it is flowing normally. In most cases the blockage is in the service line and not the municipal main line but, should the utility operator after checking the main line become aware of an issue the property owner is contacted.

4. Blocked Line Repair

A. Private Portion of the Service Line: If the blockage is located at the private portion of the service line the property owner is responsible for the costs associated with the sewer blockage repair. The blockage or back-up cause can be due to in-line grease, hair or objects; or a collapsed, damaged, or misaligned private sewer line.

B. Beyond the Private Portion of the Service Line: If the plumber or Municipality determines that the blockage is beyond the private portion of the sewer service line, the following will apply:

- If the blockage is caused by grease, hair and other foreign objects found in the sewer service the owner is responsible for the costs.
- If the blockage is caused by a collapsed or misaligned service line, the Municipality will pay the cost to repair the sewer service, including the plumbing costs incurred by the owner to discover the cause of the problem.

C. Should the Municipality be unable to determine the cause or location of the blockage or back-up and thus who is responsible, then the costs to repair (and/or dig up) the sewer service will be shared 50/50 by the Municipality and property owner.

D. Sewer Main: If the sewer blockage or backup has its origins within the sewer main, the Municipality is responsible for the costs required to restore the sewer to proper operating conditions.

5. Sewer Back-ups

Any backup into basements are not the responsibility of the Municipality. No claims for compensations shall be considered unless negligence can be proven on the part of the Municipality.

Property owners are urged to consult a certified plumber regarding the installation of a backup flow preventer valve on their sewer service if they feel there is risk of flooding their basement.



Property owners are encouraged to obtain adequate coverage under their homeowner policy for sewer backups and underground service line insurance.

6. Sewer Blockage Due to Root Buildup

Ownership of the origin of the roots will determine which party is responsible for costs of unblocking the line. If origin of the roots cannot be definitively determined, the cost will be shared 50/50 by the property owner and the municipality. Additionally, if the neighbouring property roots are causing the blockage then it remains the responsibility of the property owner and not the Municipality to recover costs from the neighbouring property owner.

7. Municipality's Sewer Camera Assistance to Private Property Owners

To assist in the determination of the sewer blockage cause, the plumber may request the Municipality to provide a camera inspection. If the camera reveals that the blockage is the property owner's responsibility, then the Municipality shall invoice the property owner for this service at the set rate.

