
Blockages in Residential Sewer Lines

References: *Municipal Government Act, RSA 2000, c M-26 (MGA), s. 201 (1)(a)*
Sewer and Wastewater System Bylaw, Bylaw 38-2017

Policy Statement

Strathcona County will respond to a property owner's request to resolve sewer back-up problems on private property due to tree root intrusion into the sanitary sewer pipe. This will support the rehabilitation of sanitary sewer service laterals on private property that are being affected by tree roots from County-owned trees on County-owned lands.

In addition, Strathcona County will provide emergency response for sewer backups on residential sewer lines connected to the County's sewer systems.

Subject to approval in the annual operating budget, Strathcona County will provide a financing mechanism to assist with rehabilitation of the sanitary sewer service lines on private property that are being affected by tree roots from County owned trees.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to minimize property damage and reduce potential health risks associated with sewer backup, as well as to minimize the loss of trees on County-owned lands.

Definitions

C.I.P.P. means a Cured In Place relining service of pipe that does not require excavation of the pipe.

Preventative Maintenance Program means a program to treat service lines using mechanical or chemical procedures to remove roots and impede root growth. The program entails pre and post closed circuit camera inspections to ensure root growth into the service lines has ceased.

Guidelines

Within a reasonable time after receiving a complaint, Strathcona County will investigate the reported issues and discuss with the affected property owner any suggested courses of action and the estimated cost of the recommended services. Following the completion of the services Strathcona County will provide recommended courses of action to mitigate similar problems in the future.

Cost of Mitigation – Emergency response for Backups

The costs incurred by Strathcona County in responding to sewer backups will be passed along from Strathcona County to the benefitting property owner. However, if the blockage occurs in the County-owned section of the sewer system, or if the blockage occurs due to roots from a County-owned tree, Strathcona County will be responsible for the cost of the services.

Cost of Mitigation – Tree Root Intrusion

When a tree root intrusion occurs in a sanitary sewer service pipe, the cost of mitigation will be borne by:

- i. The County, when the intrusion occurs in the County-owned section of the service pipe;
- ii. The County, when the intrusion is from the roots of a County-owned tree on County-owned land;
- iii. The property owner, when the intrusion occurs in the property-owner-owned section of the service pipe and there is no County-owned tree on adjacent County-owned land;
- iv. The County and the property owner, shared in proportion to the length of pipe that requires repair or mitigation, when the intrusion occurs on both the County-owner and privately-owned sections of the service pipe.

The County supports the following options for mitigation of issues related to tree root intrusion:

- i. Preventative Maintenance Program;
- ii. C.I.P.P. Lining of entire service line;
- iii. Line replacement of either one of or both the private and County owned portions of the service line;
- iv. Other viable technology replacement or repairs that may be available;
- v. Cleaning and inspection to prevent recurrence.

In the case of ii and iii above, and where a County-owned tree is located adjacent to the residence in question the County will pay for 50% of the costs, up to a maximum of \$750, for repairing the sewer service lateral located on private property. This area is typically found between the property owner's property line and the property owner's residence.

Financing Repairs on Sewer Service Lines

The County will have a program to provide financial assistance to customers with rehabilitation of the customer's sewer service lateral to reduce the risk of a service lateral blockage due to root intrusion. The property owner must then repay the cost of rehabilitating the private portion of the service line.

In order to provide financing to a property owner for rehabilitation costs, prior to the commencement of work Strathcona County will require the property owner to enter into an agreement with the County that:

- i. allows the County to enter the property owner's private property to undertake the work; and
- ii. allows the County to undertake the work on behalf of the property owner; and
- iii. recovers the County's financial investment in a way that is agreeable to two parties; and
- iv. releases the County for liability for the County's role in any work performed for the property owner.

Policy Record

Date of Approval by Council: May 8, 2018

Next Review Date: May 8, 2021

Last Review Date: May 8, 2018

Administrative Review: Utilities

Resolution No:

Policy No: SER-009-043

Replaces: SER-001-014,
SER-001-016, SER-001-018