

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS POLICY

Subject

Cleaning and Repair of Sewer Laterals

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Purpose

The Board of Supervisors, acting as the Board of Directors of the San Diego County Sanitation District (District), desires to establish policy for the cleaning and repair of sewer laterals.

Background

Prior to July 1, 1969, it was the practice of the District to clean as well as repair the sewer laterals from the property line to the street sewer main. The property owner was then responsible for cleaning and repairing only that portion of the lateral connection located between his/her building and the property line.

At the request of the construction industry, the County Plumbing Code (Ordinance No. 3222 N.S.) makes provision for deletion of the previously required property line clean-out since a readily accessible clean-out at grade level is installed in the lateral near the building it serves.

On March 18, 1969 (Item C) the Board of Supervisors rescinded its prior policy which provided for sanitation districts to install property line clean-outs. On that date the Board of Supervisors also directed that all sanitation districts terminate the program of routine cleaning of sewer laterals effective July 1, 1969.

The State Water Resources Control Board adopted Order 2006-0003-DWQ that mandated sewer agencies establish specific programs for the management, operation, and maintenance of all parts of the sanitary sewer system owned or operated by the agency. To comply with the Order clear definition of the sewerage components for which the District is responsible is necessary.

The following clarifies the Board's intent and outlines the procedures to be followed:

Definitions

“Sewer Lateral” is the segment of pipe that transports wastewater from a building to the public sewer main. The lateral includes the entire length of sewer pipe extending from the building to its connection with the public sewer main. All sewer laterals are privately owned and not part of the public sewer system and are the responsibility of the property owner.

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“*Sewer Main*” is the publicly owned and operated sewer conveyance pipe, typically located within a road or easement, which receives sewage from private lateral connections and ultimately transports it to a treatment or reclamation facility.

Policy

It is the policy of the Board of Supervisors, acting as the Board of Directors of the San Diego County Sanitation District, that:

When a sewer lateral does not properly drain, the owner of the property served by this lateral is responsible for a reasonable effort to remove the stoppage.

When the owner has made a reasonable attempt to clear his/her sewer lateral but was unable to restore the flow; and

When it has been established that the stoppage is located between the property line and the sewer main in the public easement,

Then Operation and Maintenance Personnel from the District will attempt to clear the blockage and restore flow in that portion of the lateral located between the property line and the sewer main as soon as possible. If the blockage cannot be cleared, the property owner will be responsible for sewer lateral repair or replacement.

For the purposes of this policy:

A reasonable attempt will be defined as an unsuccessful attempt to remove the stoppage, using a licensed plumber or firm specializing in cleaning sewer laterals. Showing a reasonable attempt will require a receipt or a signed statement, from a licensed plumber or firm specializing in cleaning sewer laterals, giving adequate assurance that tools normally employed for cleaning laterals were used but were unsuccessful in removing the stoppage from the lateral.

Sunset Date

This policy will be reviewed for continuance by 12-31-22.

Board Action

12-1-69 (36)

6-20-89 (63)

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4-14-99 (11)

08-07-02 (5)

12-09-08 (33)

12-16-15 (8)

CAO Reference

1. Department of Public Works