

**Blockages in Sewer Collection System Policy**

DATE DRAFTED: FEBRUARY 26, 1998

This policy applies in situations where the Sewer Maintenance Department removes blockages in a sewer line. All blockages in the sewer on property either owned by the City or within a sewer easement such as trunks, mains, lower laterals, or manholes are the responsibility of the City and will be removed by the City at the expense of the City. However, blockages in sewer (i.e. upper laterals, private branches, private manholes) on property owned by the private entity and on which there is no City Sewer easement are the responsibility of the private entity and any expenses related to removing the blockage are the responsibility of the private entity. After a determination has been made by the City regarding the responsible party, the City will either (1) remove the blockage if it is the responsibility of the City or (2) notify the private entity that the blockage is their responsibility.

The Sewer Maintenance Department will use the following steps for removing and/or determining the party responsible for the blockage:

1. Sewer personnel will inspect the manhole immediately upgradient and downgradient of the location where the lower lateral connects to the main. If there is a blockage in the main, the blockage will be removed at the expense of the City.
2. If there is no blockage in the main but the blockage remains in the lateral, sewer personnel will establish the approximate location of the property line that separates the City’s property (i.e. easement or right-of-way) from the private property.
3. *If a cleanout connection is located at the above-determined line,* sewer personnel will use the cleanout connection to remove any blockage that might be in the lower lateral. If the lower lateral is cleared of a blockage or if there is no blockage in the lower lateral, any remaining blockage in the upper lateral will be the responsibility of the property owner.
4. *If a cleanout connection is not located at the above-determined line and there are no other methods of determining whether the blockage is in the upper or lower lateral*, the property owner will be responsible for providing the sewer department access to the upper lateral at some location that is not under the house. THE SEWER DEPARTMENT WILL NOT PARTICIPATE IN LOCATING, EXCAVATING, TAPPING OR BACKFILLING THE ACCESS TO THE UPPER LATERAL. After access to the upper lateral has been provided by the property owner, the sewer department will remove the blockage. During the process of removing the blockage, the location of the blockage will be noted and marked.
   * 1. If the blockage was in the lower lateral, the sewer department will repair the lower lateral (if necessary) and install a cleanout at the property line. Also, the sewer department will repair the upper lateral where the access was provided.
     2. If the blockage was in the upper lateral, the sewer department personnel will notify the homeowner that the blockage was their responsibility and will require that the property owner install a cleanout at the property line and repair the location where the access was provided as required by Section 21-70 of the Alexander City Code of Ordinances (Ordinance Number 800, Article III, § 3, 6-6-83). This cleanout connection must be installed in accordance with the City’s Plumbing Codes and is subject to the inspection requirements of the Code. SEWER DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL WILL NOTIFY THE PROPERTY OWNER THAT FUTURE BLOCKAGES WILL BE CHECKED ONLY AT THE CLEANOUT AT THE PROPERTY LINE. The address will be put on a list of property owners for which there will not be any future blockages removed in the upper lateral (nor the lower lateral unless a cleanout has been installed at the property line). Additionally, failure of the property owner to install the cleanout and repair the pipe where the access was provided in a timely manner will result in further action by the city.

EXCEPTIONS: NONE

EFFECTIVE DATE: FEBRUARY 26, 1998

DATE OF MODIFICATION: August 5, 1999

November 1, 2000

February 21, 2002