

Los Alamos Community Services District

Frequently Asked Questions about Sewer

Sewage is backing up into my house/building through overflowing plumbing fixtures, such as, toilets, sinks, bathtubs etc... What should I do?

If these problems occur and you **are not** using any water for these plumbing fixtures, there may be a problem in the public sewer main. Please call 1-805-344-4195 during normal business hours. If your problem is after normal business hours, please call the same phone number and you will be directed to an on-call operator.

If you **are** using water for any plumbing fixtures, such as, toilet, sink, bathtub, shower, dishwasher or washing machine, turn the water off immediately. This indicates a possible problem in your building sewer. The District is only responsible for the public portion of the sewer system; therefore you will need to call a plumber located in the yellow pages of the phone book. If in doubt please call the District immediately at 1-805-344-4195.

What is the main cause of sewer backups?

Most of the time, sewer backups are due to tree roots that will grow into and clog the lines as they seek the water inside the pipes. Discharging grease down your drain into the sewer system can also cause backups.

How can I avoid sewer backup problems?

There are simple measures you can take to maintain your sewer lateral and the District's sewer system in optimum condition, such as:

- Don't pour FOG (fats, oils & grease) down your drain. Dispose your FOG's in a container and dispose of in the garbage or absorb them with coffee grinds or cat litter.
- Put food scraps in the garbage.
- Don't rinse off grease and oil with hot water. Dry wipe pots and pans containing grease and oil with paper towels and dispose in garbage.
- If you have frequent backups, you may want to consider a video inspection by a plumber to see what is going on. Snaking your lateral to remove roots may be necessary. If you have chronic root problems, one possible solution is to remove trees, plants or shrubs that may be causing the problem. **Please contact the District before snaking your lateral** for roots so we can catch the root ball as it is pushed into the sewer main. This will prevent sanitary sewer over flows (SSO's) that could back flow to your home. Please use a licensed and reputable plumber.
- Don't flush incompatible or bulky items, such as, toys, trash, diapers, baby wipes or disposable wipes, rags, egg shells, coffee grinds etc... down your sewer as all these items can cause backups.
- Identify where the cleanouts (access points) to your sewer line are and keep them accessible in case a plumber needs to access them.

Who is responsible for the maintenance and repair of sewer laterals and cleanouts?

The District is responsible for the maintenance and repair of main sewers and lateral sewers within the public right of way, provided there is an accessible and serviceable cleanout at the property line. Maintenance and repair of the building sewer, cleanout and point-of-connection to the District's lateral are the responsibility of the property owner.

How can I find my sewer lateral and where the District's sanitary sewer mains are?

The Los Alamos CSD maintains records and maps of the location of all sanitary sewer mains and building sewer laterals to the property line. Please contact the District office during normal business hours for information about the location of your sewer lateral.