

MODEL WEB CONTENT FOR CITY SANITARY SEWER DEPARTMENTS

The following information is designed to be used in conjunction with the Sewer Toolkit, located in the Wastewater section of the Florida Rural Water Association website at www.frwa.net.

Your city website can be an effective method of educating the public about city operations and programs. The sample website content below is designed to help you develop (or expand) web content about your city's sanitary sewer system. Keep in mind that these are only examples – the information should be customized in the way that most effectively shares your city's message and best meets your city's needs.

If you don't find what you are looking for below, remember there are many cities in Florida that do a great job of sharing information on their web sites. Just enter www.google.com on your website browser, enter the name of a city and explore the information others have to offer about their sanitary sewer systems.

SAMPLE ONE

Contact Info

City of Palm Falls

Public Works Department Address Palm Falls, FL 00000

Telephone: (555) 555-5555 Fax (555) 555-5555 pubworks@ci.palm-falls.fl.us

Sanitary Sewer

Public works is responsible for inspecting and maintaining the collection system infrastructure and the sanitary lift stations and ensuring uninterrupted collection of wastewater.

The City has _____ miles of sanitary sewer lines. Most of the lines are in the street. Some run through utility easements in grassy areas. Each year, the Public Works department cleans approximately one-third of the City's sanitary sewer lines. Lines requiring a higher level of maintenance are cleaned annually or semi-annually. This routine maintenance helps to prevent blockages and backups.

The sanitary sewer lines are cleaned using high performance sewer cleaning equipment. A cleaning nozzle is propelled from one manhole to the next using water under high pressure. The nozzle is then pulled back to the starting manhole. As the nozzle is pulled back, water scours the inside of the sanitary sewer pipe. Any debris in the pipe is pulled back with the water. The debris is removed from the manhole with a vacuum unit. If roots are found, they are cut with a root cutter. This process is repeated on every sewer line cleaned.

Keep Your Toilet Bowl Lid Down!

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City's sanitary sewer lines. The sanitary sewer lines are cleaned using high performance sewer cleaning equipment. A cleaning nozzle is propelled from one manhole to the next using water under high pressure. The nozzle is then pulled back to the starting manhole. As the nozzle is pulled back, water scours the inside of the sanitary sewer pipe. Any debris in the pipe is pulled back with the water. The debris is removed from the manhole with a vacuum unit. If roots are found, they are cut with a root cutter. This process is repeated on every sewer line cleaned.

During cleaning of sanitary sewer lines, air occasionally vents into a home through the sanitary sewer service line and ventilation system. When this happens water in the toilet bowl can bubble or surge or, in rare cases, splash out of the bowl. The common causes of air venting into homes during sanitary sewer cleaning are: air movement from normal cleaning operations, the use of higher pressure necessary when cleaning sanitary sewer lines that have a steep slope, sewer lines running close to the building, a plugged roof vent, and the size and complexity of the home's waste and ventilation system. So, to minimize water splashing out of your toilet bowl, make it a habit to keep the lid down.

Sewer Backups

If you have a sewer backup and do not know where the blockage is, you should contact the City before contacting a drain cleaning company. You may be able to avoid an unnecessary charge if the problem is in the City's sewer line rather than in your property's service line. A Public Works employee will determine if the problem is in the City's line or in your property's service line.

555-555-5555 (Public Works)

Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

555-555-5550

After hours, weekends and holidays.

The property owner is responsible for clearing any blockage in the service line between the home and the City sanitary sewer main. This includes debris and tree roots. The property owner is also responsible for cleaning and repairing any damage done to the property by the backup.

The City is not automatically liable for blockages in the City's sanitary sewer system. The City is only liable for those damages if the backup was caused by the City's negligence.

Most homeowner insurance policies exclude damage resulting from sewer backups. Many insurance providers do have insurance riders that can be purchased to insure loss due to sewer backups.

Sanitary sewer line blockages are typically caused by roots, grease, and improper disposal of items. Tree roots can enter the sanitary sewer system at joints and cracks in the sewer service lines and mains. Grease can solidify in the sewer lines and restrict other waste from flowing through. The lines can be blocked by items like disposable diapers,

paper towels, feminine hygiene products, washing machine lint, or other items improperly flushed down the drain or toilet.

Sewer Repairs

The property owner is responsible for any repairs on the service line from the home to, and including, the connection at the property line. In most locations, the City is responsible for repairs within the public road right of way.

Sewer Odors

Floor and sink drains usually have water filling the bottom of the drain trap which acts as a barrier between the air in the sewer line and the air in your home. When a drain trap becomes dry, sewer odors can enter into the residence. If you experience sewer odors in your home, run water down your drain.

Sump Pumps

If you use a sump pump in your basement, it is illegal to drain the water into the basement sanitary sewer drain or laundry tub. Sump pumps must be discharged outside of the house to the yard or drainway that will prevent the water from draining directly to the street. Call the Public Works department if you need more information.

SAMPLE TWO

Sewer Backups and Blockages

What to do in the event of a sewer backup

Property owners experiencing a sewer backup may call 555-555-4555 between the hours of 7 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., Monday thru Friday. After 3:30 p.m. and on weekends, residents may call Police at 911. City crews will be dispatched to assess the situation.

If it is determined that no blockage or restrictions exist in the City's sanitary sewer system, the property owner is advised to contact a professional plumber or drain cleaning service to have the private sewer service inspected. The City cannot make a recommendation for drain cleaning services. A property owner may wish to obtain several estimates.

Property owners should be aware, if the problem is in the private sewer line, the property owner is responsible for correcting the problem. The owner of the property is responsible for maintaining and cleaning the sewer line from the building to the City's sewer main, including the connection on the sewer main.

Many homeowners' insurance policies exclude damage resulting from sewer backups. However, some insurance companies do provide sewer backup coverage. If you are concerned about the possibility of a sewer backup and want to insure that you are covered, the City urges you to check with your home insurer regarding the availability of sewer backup insurance.

How to prevent backups in your service line & in the City sewer main Property owners can do many things to prevent their service from backing up. Remember, the very same things can help prevent backups in the City main as well.

Grease: Cooking oil should be poured into a heat-resistant container and disposed of in the garbage after it cools, not down the drain. Some people assume that washing grease down the drain with hot water is satisfactory. This grease goes down the drain, cools off, and solidifies either in the drain, the property owner's service, or in the sewer main. When this happens, the line eventually clogs.

Paper Products: Paper towels, disposable diapers, and feminine products cause many problems in the property owner's service as well as in the City main. These products do not deteriorate quickly. They become lodged in portions of the service and main, causing sewer backups. These products should be disposed of in the garbage.

Sewer Root Control: The continual flow of nutrient-filled water found in sewer pipes attracts tree roots. Roots growing along pipes exert significant pressure on pipes. These roots may push into and around gasket connection points which may expand and break seals. Root infiltration can cause a blockage to the service resulting in sewage backup in your home and damage to your property.

Tips for Controlling Roots: The conventional method of removing roots by a professional drain cleaning service involves cutting or tearing of roots to solve an immediate problem or stoppage, but this method does not retard the growth or destroy the roots outside the pipe. This is similar to pruning the bushes and shrubs surrounding your residence. An annual chemical root control program is an effective preventive maintenance measure. A product that foams with the addition of water is the most effective means of coating the roots and pipe surfaces. These products may be purchased from your local hardware store or home center.

Illegal Plumbing Connections: Do not connect French drains, sump pumps, roof gutter drains, or foundation drains to your sanitary sewer service. It is illegal and will cause debris and silt to clog your service line. Consult a plumber to correct any illegal connections.

Utility Billing Information

Reading Your Utility Bill

The City is committed to providing quality water and sewer services. A review of rates is conducted annually to determine the City's costs to provide these services. The City's intention is to recover costs from the users of the services.

Basic Charge

The City has established a basic charge because there are fixed costs involved with providing service to each customer regardless of water usage.

Water Charges

Water usage is determined by a meter reading received electronically from each property on a monthly basis.

City Sewer Charges

City Sewer charges cover the costs associated with the collection of sewage and maintenance of the pipes and facilities. They also cover the expenses of transporting sewage to the regional treatment plant and treatment of the sewage to meet federal water quality standards. This charge is based on water consumption and is subject to a maximum that is set according to your winter water usage.

Late Payments

Past due amounts are subject to a monthly and annual penalty.

Delinquent Accounts

Delinquent amounts are certified to the property taxes of the home.

Payment Drop Box

Would you like to save postage? For your convenience the City has a drop box for water and sewer bill payments. The drive-up drop box is located in the City Hall parking lot. Payments deposited in the drop box are credited within three business days. Place your check and remittance stub in an envelope and drop it in the box - no postage required.

Moving In or Out? Final Meter Reading Required

Customers moving from residences or businesses need to contact Public Works at 555-555-5555 with a forwarding address for the final billing and meter reading. Customers will be asked to provide a meter reading when moving in or out of a property.

OTHER INFORMATION TO CONSIDER FOR YOUR CITY'S WEB SITE**Sewer use ordinance**

The City's Sewer Use Ordinance prohibits certain discharges into their sanitary sewer lines. The City's Sewer Use Ordinance can be viewed at _____ (*insert link or .pdf document to the City's sewer use ordinance*).

Brochure

For more information about sewer backups and what you should know and how you should protect yourself, please see the following brochure: (*insert link or .pdf document to brochure; if your City does not have a brochure, see model brochure developed as part of the Sewer Toolkit www.frwa.net*).

Equipment used in sewer maintenance process

The Public Works department may use the following types of equipment when performing inspection and maintenance of its sanitary sewer system:

Jetter/Vactor - The jetter uses a high pressure water system to clean the sewer main of debris, such as sand, grease, and other materials that settle in the sewer main. Using a high pressure water system, the jetter propels a hose, with a specially designed nozzle, into the sewer main. The hose is then pulled back slowly while the high pressure water system flushes the materials to a downstream manhole for removal by the vactor. The vactor uses a positive displacement to create a vacuum that can lift debris from manholes.

Rodding Machine - A rodding machine is designed to push or pull a specially designed steel rod while rotating in the sewer main. With the use of specially designed tools attached to the end of the rod, this machine is one of the most efficient and dependable methods for removing heavy root growths, sand, grease, and debris from storm, sanitary, and combined sewer pipes.

Bucket Machine - A bucket machine is primarily used to remove debris in larger sewer lines from manhole to manhole. When pulled in one direction, and with both ends open, the bucket is pulled through the debris to be removed. When the direction is reversed, the tailing end of the bucket closes and traps debris inside. The bucket is then pulled to the downstream manhole for removal.

TV Inspection - Closed circuit television video (CCTV) inspection equipment and pipeline inspection/asset management software is used to inspect sanitary and storm sewers. The system uses a self-propelled transporter to carry the camera down the sewer main. While the camera is in operation, visual data is recorded for maintenance assessment needs.

Manhole Inspection - Manhole inspections are performed to quickly verify how the large diameter sewers are operating, and to visually inspect signs of infiltration from the cover, walls, joints, and pipe connections. Manhole inspections should be conducted on a routine basis.