

NHTMA

North Huntingdon Township Municipal Authority

Televised Lateral Inspections and Dye Tests



On May 1, 2008 the NHTMA adopted rules and regulations which mandate the televised inspection of sanitary sewer laterals prior to the sale, transfer or refinancing of any property. Lateral lines are the homeowner's private sewer line that connects the home to the main line. The lateral inspection is in addition to the dye test that has been required for many years. The combined cost of the tests is currently \$230, but is subject to change. The cost for a municipal lien letter is \$30.00, also subject to change.

It is extremely important to schedule these tests as soon as you decide to sell, transfer or refinance your property so as not to delay your closing. Paid requests for the tests, as well as for the municipal lien letter, must be received in the Authority office at least 14 days prior to the scheduled closing. Forms and additional information are available on our website at www.nhtma.org.

What is a Municipal Lien Letter?

Municipal lien letters provide information for your closing company on the account balance, status of the inspections, and existence of any liens against the property as of the scheduled date of the closing.

What is a Televised Lateral Inspection?

The lateral inspection involves inserting a camera into the site tee, vent or cleanout. The crew and owner are able to view the inside of the lateral on a video screen. The absence of an air vent or cleanout is an automatic failure. Owners should locate these devices prior to the inspection. Properties with a backflow valve may need to be televised from within the home, and the owner or a representative must be present.

What is a Dye Test?

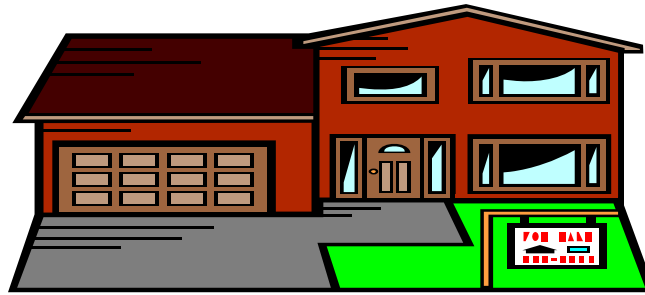
Dye testing involves placing dye into the toilets, sinks, downspouts, area drains, laundry sinks, etc., and then flushing with water to determine where these facilities are connected. Sources of stormwater, such as downspouts, stairwell drains, driveway drains, etc. are not permitted to drain into the Authority's system.

In the event your drains are not connected to the Authority's sewers, it is likely that evidence of the dye may appear in your lawn, where these drains normally exit. The dye is non-toxic, and it will not harm your lawn, landscaping or pets. It will disappear within a few days. However, care should be taken to not walk on the affected area until the dye disappears, since the dye may adhere to shoes.

Please notify the Authority if you have stormwater sources connected to a cistern.

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Are You Selling or Transferring Your Home?

In the case of home sales and transfers, defects that are identified in the inspection process must be repaired prior to the closing, or the owner and buyer may enter into an agreement with the Authority to make the repairs after the closing. As part of the agreement, the owner and/or buyer posts escrow with the Authority to ensure that the repairs are completed in a timely and appropriate manner. Repair procedures are available at www.nhtma.org.

Tests remain effective for a two-year period. However, on home sales and transfers, new construction that is less than two years old must have a lateral inspection if one was not done as part of the final inspection upon completion of construction.

Are You Refinancing (amended April 1, 2009)?

In the case of a refinancing, repairs may be made within one or five years, depending on the level of severity. The owner enters into an agreement with the Authority prior to closing, but escrow is not required. When refinancing new construction that is less than two years old, no additional tests are required. Tests remain effective for a two-year period. Repair procedures are available at www.nhtma.org.

What If I'm Not Selling, Transferring or Refinancing?

General Information and Special Project Areas

The Authority is also testing laterals in areas where it plans to repair and/or replace main lines, as well as throughout the Township in an effort to reduce inflow and infiltration of stormwater into the system.

- Property owners will be notified by letter prior to the televising.
- Property owners must have a representative present during the inspection of any inside plumbing, and are welcome to be present during televising of the outside lines.
- Defects that are identified within the Authority's easements and under roads will be repaired by the Authority at no cost to the property owner.
- There is no cost to the property owner for the televised inspection, other than those costs associated with a sale, transfer or refinancing.
- To conduct the televised inspection, authority personnel must have access to either a site tee, cleanout or vent.
- Absence of any one of these devices could potentially result

in a failure.

- If a backflow valve has been installed by the Authority at the property, it may be necessary for the crew to access the line from the interior of the home.
- Property owners will be notified by letter of the results of the inspection.
- Property owners will be given from 1 to 5 years to make the repairs depending on the severity of the defect, except on sales or transfers.
- Property owners may apply for any grants that may be available to assist with the repairs, except in the case of a sale, transfer or refinancing. Information on grants is available at www.nhtma.org.





Why Are These Tests Required?

Construction of the sanitary sewer system began in the early 1970's and consists of nearly 255 miles of publicly owned sewer lines, with approximately 11,500 customers connected to the system. It is estimated that the private lateral portion of the system adds another 100+ miles of line.

Is the system undersized? No. The fact is our system operates very well in all but the most extreme precipitation events. On those rare occasions, the cause is simple: storm water entry into the lines.

During severe storm events, the additional water being added to the system can exceed the pipe capacity, resulting in overflow conditions. This storm water and ground water entering the system inappropriately is referred to as Inflow and Infiltration, or I&I. The additional storm water, which may result in system overflows, can:

- Lift manhole lids, allowing sewage to overflow into streams, streets, walkways and yards.
- Cause basement flooding from backup of the sanitary sewer lateral. This flooding can cause extensive property damage and presents an unnecessary health hazard.

If your property is introducing any amount of I&I into the system, you are directly contributing to the problem. Studies have shown that 50% to 80% of I&I originates within the private sector.

A single 8" sewer pipe, at a minimum 0.5% slope, can accommodate the sewage flow from 600 households. But that same pipe can be overloaded with I&I from as few as 40 properties.

If 30% of NHTMA's customers are contributing I&I, that equates to 3,150 properties. At just 2 gallons per minute per property, that amounts to excess flows of more than 9 million gallons per day, or over 5 times the normal "dry day" flows.



CDBG Program Guidelines Lateral Line Repairs Country Hills Area

The Township of North Huntingdon has received approval for 2008 Community Development Block Grant Funding (CDBG) in the amount of \$116,000. The purpose of the funding is to cover the cost of repairing the privately-owned building lateral sanitary sewer repairs for income-eligible property owners based on a low-to-moderate income scale. This outline is submitted on behalf of the North Huntingdon Township Municipal Authority and outlines the program's goals, parameters and administration.

Phase II involves homes in Country Hills on portions of Westchester Drive, Birchbrook Court, Fieldstone Drive, Crestwood Drive, and Cedardale Drive. The Authority will be replacing its main line in these areas within the next two years. However, the Authority will begin inspecting the private laterals on these homes within the next few weeks.

The process for this project will consist of the following steps:

- Homeowner Applies to Westmoreland County Planning for Funding Now – 10 day time limit
- Westmoreland County Planning Department Determines Eligibility
- Authority Inspects Building Lateral Sanitary Sewer
- Authority Notifies Residents of Inspection Results
- Authority Solicits Bids for Repairs
- Homeowner Completes Authority's Grant Information Packet – 10 day time limit
- Authority Schedules Pre-construction Meetings
- Contractor Repairs Building Lateral Sanitary Sewer Lines

Homeowner Applies for Funding

The homeowner will be given 10 days from receipt of this letter in which to apply for CDBG funding. The completed application must be mailed to Westmoreland County Planning. Applying for the grant now, before the inspections are completed, will expedite the repair process in the event your lateral fails, and you are qualified. All income information will remain confidential, and will not be shared with the Township or the Authority. Grant application packets are included with this notice.

In an effort to make this program available to as many eligible homeowners as possible, failure to submit a completed application to WCPD within 10 days of receipt may result in that homeowner becoming ineligible to apply for funding.

WCPD Determines Eligibility

Eligibility will be determined on a first-come, first-serve basis, and will be limited to the available funding. The date on which a complete application is received by WCPD will be used to prioritize funding requests. **Incomplete applications will not be considered.**

The Westmoreland County Department of Planning and Development will review all completed applications and will make the final determination as to a homeowner's eligibility for funding. The Authority will notify the homeowner regarding their eligibility status.

If you do not meet the income guidelines, please complete only sections 1a and 3a, sign and return the form to the County.

Authority Inspects Lateral Lines

Authority personnel have been trained both in the operation of the camera equipment, and on inspection procedures using NASSCO standards. NASSCO is the National Association of Sewer Service Companies that was established in 1976.

Authority Solicits Bids for Repairs

Building lateral sanitary sewer repairs for income-eligible homeowners will be made by a contractor chosen through a competitive bidding process. The Authority's consulting engineer prepared bid specifications based on Westmoreland County's and HUD's funding guidelines. The specifications were approved by the Westmoreland County Department of Planning and Development (WCPD) prior to advertisement. Bid specs were based on unit prices to cover a variety of repair methods and needs.

Authority Notifies Residents of Inspection Results

Certified letters will be mailed to all property owners notifying them of the results of their inspection. An application for CDBG funding was mailed to the homeowner before the lateral was inspected, and the homeowner was encouraged to apply immediately.

If the building lateral sanitary sewer condition is classified as Level 3, the homeowner will be given 5 years within which to make the repairs. Building lateral sanitary sewers that are determined to be Level 4 or 5 must be repaired within 12 months. Those homeowners who qualify for the grant will have their repairs done by the Authority's contractor, and these time limits will not apply.

Homeowner Completes Authority's Grant Information Packet

Upon notification of a homeowner's eligibility for CDBG funding, and determination that the lateral has failed the inspection, the Authority will send the homeowner a grant information packet which will include a form giving the Authority and its contractor permission to access the property, as well as a release and hold harmless agreement covering both the Township and the Authority. The repaired or replaced lateral will continue to be owned and maintained by the homeowner. **The homeowner will have 10 days in which to execute and return the documents to the Authority in order to remain eligible for funding.**

Authority Schedules Pre-construction Meetings/Issues Work Orders

Prior to the start of construction, a pre-construction conference will be held with officials of the Westmoreland County Department of Planning and Development, the Authority's contractor and engineer, and appropriate local officials.

In addition, the Authority will meet with the homeowner to discuss the specific repairs that are needed at each individual home.

Contractor Repairs Lateral Lines

The contractor will be scheduled to make the repairs to the homeowner's building lateral sanitary sewer line based on the terms and conditions of the bid specifications, and the Authority's Rules and Regulations. The homeowner will be notified of the date on which the repairs are scheduled to begin. The Authority's inspector will be on site during the repair process, and the Authority will conduct a final inspection at the completion of the repair.

Restoration

The contractor will be required to restore the homeowner's property, including lawns, landscaping, driveways, etc. to a condition equal to or better than that which existed prior to construction.



How Do I Repair My Lateral?

If the dye test and/or lateral inspection of your property reveals certain defects within the private lateral, you must make the repairs within a specified time period. You will be given a report that shows the results of the test. This document outlines the steps you should take to complete the repairs.

Before undertaking any repairs, or obtaining repair estimates, we strongly suggest that you schedule a time to review the results of the test with our System Superintendent, Charles Gilbert. Mr. Gilbert will discuss the specific defects that were found, describe repair options, and show you the actual video inspection. You may want to have your potential contractor attend this meeting as well.

Prior to hiring a contractor, we urge you to obtain at least three written estimates from local contractors, along with references. Please check these references carefully, and obtain a certificate of insurance from the contractor that you select to complete the work. The Authority cannot recommend specific contractors. ***You may also complete the repairs yourself, without hiring a contractor.***



You or your contractor must apply for a Re-Inspection Permit from the Authority prior to beginning the repairs. There is no cost for the Permit. You or your contractor must also make arrangements for the work to be inspected by the Authority before covering.

If, during the course of the repairs, you or your contractor has any questions or concerns about the condition of your lateral, please contact the Authority immediately, and we will send a representative to the site.

You have the right to appeal the results of the test to the Authority's Board of Directors. This can be accomplished by sending a letter to the Authority Manager, at the address shown at the bottom of this page. The Manager will contact you to arrange a meeting with the Board. The appeal should be made prior to making repairs on the line if at all possible so that the original condition of the line is intact.

Please call our office at 724-863-2860 to arrange to meet with Mr. Gilbert to discuss your inspection.

