



Why Are the Dye Test and Lateral Inspection Required?

Act 537 of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) requires local governments to adopt a corrective action plan to control overloading of the sanitary sewer system and one of the requirements is to remove stormwater from these types of sewer lines. This storm water and ground water entering the system inappropriately is referred to as Inflow and Infiltration (I&I).

During severe storm events, the additional water being added to the system can exceed the sanitary sewer line's capacity, resulting in overflow conditions. The additional storm water, which may result in system overflows, can:

- Cause dilution of sewage and decrease the efficiency of treatment. Unnecessary treatment costs could raise the sewer service rates for all ratepayers.
- Lift manhole lids, allowing sewage to overflow into streams, streets, walkways, and yards therefore creating a health hazard.
- Cause basement flooding from backup of the sanitary sewer lateral. This flooding can cause extensive property damage and presents a health hazard.

I&I may occur without knowledge because sewage flow maybe fine. A working sewer line is not an indication of I&I. 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.

If 30% of NHTMA's customers are contributing I&I, that equates to 3,750 properties. At just 2 gallons per minute per property, that amounts to excess flows of more than 10.5 million gallons per day, or over 6 times the normal "dry day" flows.

The Authority has determined that, under normal circumstances, the quality, character, and condition of the sanitary lateral can change significantly with the passage of time. Based upon industry standards, NHTMA has chosen to only require additional testing at a minimum of every 5 years.

NHTMA requires the tests on sales and refinancees for various reasons that include:

- It is a means of demonstrating to the lending institution and subsequent purchasers that the property has a functioning sanitary lateral that is not permitting I&I into the public sewage system and that there are no known violations at the time of the loan or sale and will not need costly repair or remediation.
- Many of the older homes in our area have terracotta lines that are susceptible to tree root infiltrations or cracks over time. Some homes are passed down for generations. With no sale there would be no tests. Therefore, the tests are also required on refinancees.

Our official Rules and Regulations are available on our web site, www.nhtma.org under "Customer Service – Policies & Procedures – Sewer Use Rules and Regulations", and the specific language requiring the lien letters and tests begins on page 17, paragraph 4.23.