

	MUNICIPALITY OF RHINELAND	POLICY NO. 2023/60
	ADOPTED BY: Resolution No./23	Last Updated: Feb 2023
	DATE: February 22 2023	Page: 1 of 1
	TITLE: Water and Sewer Line Blockage Policy	Department: Public Works

PURPOSE: The Municipality of Rhineland recognizes the importance of maintaining a sanitary sewer and water system that operates efficiently and as trouble free as possible for their residents. This policy will direct decisions to whom the cost and responsibility to repair or replace any portion of the sanitary sewer system or water system will be required.

RATIONALE: From time-to-time Municipality of Rhineland residents report blockages in the sanitary sewer line. Upon receiving notice from a property owner regarding a suspected blockage in a sanitary sewer line, the Public Works Department will attempt to resolve the existing blockages, determine responsibility, and limit future occurrences as per this policy.

POLICY STATEMENT: This policy refers to maintenance and repair of sewer lines, water lines and curb stops but does not refer to or make claim to any damage caused by sewer blockages. All residents should secure their own sewer backup insurance from a private carrier as the Municipality of Rhineland is only responsible for damage caused by sewer backup according to the provisions of the Municipal Act which states:

Limited liability for utilities or services

389 Where a municipality operates a utility or provides a service, it is not liable for loss or damage as a result of

- (a) the breaking of a pipe, service line, conduit, pole, wire, cable or other part of the utility or service; or
- (b) the discontinuance or interruption of a service or connection;

by reason of

- (c) accident;
- (d) disconnection for non-payment or non-compliance with a term or condition of service; or
- (e) necessity to repair or replace a part of the utility or service.

Since the municipality cannot assume financial responsibility for damages resulting from sewage backups that are beyond their control, it is important that property owners confirm that they are adequately insured—particularly if areas of their home lie below ground level. It also reinforces the importance of properly maintaining your homes plumbing system. The Municipality of Rhineland will periodically inform homeowners of this policy and the importance of private insurance.

ADMINISTRATION AND PROCEDURES:

Upon receiving the call from the property owner regarding a sanitary sewer blockage, the Public Works Department will attempt to determine whether the blockage originates on the service line or the sanitary main line.

A. Sanitary Service Line Blockages

If it is obvious that the blockage is in the service line, the Public Works Department will;

1. Assist with making the arrangements with a plumber or drain cleaning contractor at the homeowner's expense. Reimbursement from the Municipality of Rhineland will only be given as provided for in this policy.
2. The homeowner will be advised that they may contact a plumber or drain cleaning contractor to clear the blockage at their expense and that they will only be eligible for reimbursement from the Municipality of Rhineland for these costs as provided for in this policy.

B. Responsibility for Maintenance of Sanitary Sewer Service Lines

1. The property owner will be responsible for the maintenance and repair of the entire service line between their building and the sanitary sewer main in the street when the blockage is caused by any of the following;
 - Grease
 - Any material or object originating from the property owner side
 - Tree roots from trees originating from private property
2. The property owner will be responsible for the maintenance and repair of the service line located on their property when the blockage is caused by physical pipe failures, faulty installations, or settlements on private property, including at the point of connection on or near the property line.
3. The Municipality of Rhineland will be responsible for the maintenance and repair of the service line located on public property when the blockage is caused by any of the following;
 - Physical pipe failures, faulty installations, or settlements on public property
 - Tree roots from trees originating on public property

4. The responsibility for maintenance and repairs to service lines will be determined by an investigation conducted by the Public Works Department or his designate, based on various contractor maintenance reports, property history, and video inspections of the service line.
5. If it is determined that the responsibility for repairs or maintenance is that of both the property owner and the Municipality of Rhineland, the Public Works Department will attempt to coordinate a repair or maintenance plan that is amicable to both parties.

C. Sanitary Main Line Blockages

If it is obvious that the blockage is in the Sanitary Main Line, the Public Works Department will immediately summons staff and/or a contractor to respond to the blockage and clear the main line.

If there is a history of blockages in the section of the main line that experienced the blockage, the Public Works Department will investigate further by conducting a video inspection of the line. The Public Works Department will determine the likelihood of potential problems in the future with the main line and make recommendations as to the repair or maintenance of the main line. The recommendations may include repairing the main line, increasing the maintenance schedule, or recommend that no repair or additional maintenance of the main line is required.

D. Curb Stop Repairs

Any curb stop repairs required due to damage by the homeowner or anyone entering the property of the homeowner will be made at the homeowner's expense. For example, if a contractor is driving a truck onto a property where a home is being built and the curb stop is damaged by the truck. This cost to repair will be at the homeowner's expense and a fine may be imposed as per the Municipality of Rhineland By-Law Enforcement By-Law.

The Municipality of Rhineland Council may vary this policy if required.