Side Sewer Ownership

City Property vs. Private

Who is responsible for the side sewer?

Generally, if a cleanout exists at the right-of-way line:

- The City is responsible from the sewer main to the cleanout, including connection to the main.
- The property owner is responsible from the cleanout to the building. This includes the cleanout.

Generally, if a cleanout does not exist at the right-of-way line:

- The property owner is responsible for the side sewer from the sewer main to the building.
- The City is responsible for the connection to the main.

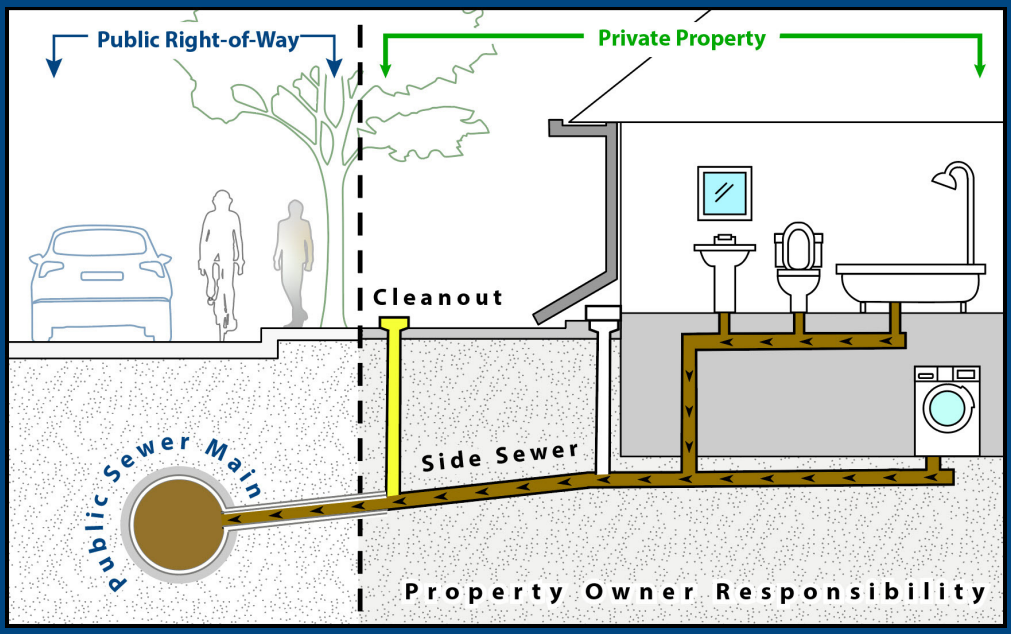
Generally, when a property owner installs a cleanout on an existing side sewer:

- The property owner is responsible for the installation of the cleanout. The new cleanout must meet current City standards.
- The City will accept responsibility for the side sewer from the cleanout to the main, once it is shown to be structurally sound and without major defects.
- The property owner is responsible for any needed repairs to the side sewer between the sewer main to the cleanout. A post construction video of the sewer lateral is required.

Will the City remove roots?

The City will not remove roots or blockages in a side sewer. The City is not responsible for blockages originating on private property. The City may remove roots in the City-owned sewer if they originated from trees in the right-of-way.

Diagram of a Typical Side Sewer



Who is responsible for repairs?

- If there is a blockage, it must be cleared by the property owner. This might require a cleanout installation by the owner.
- It is the property owner's responsibility to demonstrate if the needed repair is the City's responsibility.
- If there is sufficient evidence that a needed repair is between the cleanout and the sewer main, the City will accept responsibility for the repair. The repair will be prioritized along with other sewer repairs in the City and may not be done immediately. Higher priority will be given to problems causing a sewer backup or sinkhole.

Regardless of ownership, the property owner is responsible for removing blockages between the building and the sewer main.

Contact Information

City of Olympia Dispatch: 360.753.8333 (available 24/7)

Email: *publicworks@ci.olympia.wa.us*

For full details about side sewer ownership regulations, refer to Olympia Municipal Code 13.08.040

Engineering Design & Development Standards 7B.090

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