Wastewater & Septic Frequently Asked Questions

What do I do if My Sewer is Plugged?

In the event your sewer connection (building service connection) to a municipally owned and operated sanitary sewer is obstructed:

- Call a licensed plumber or other qualified person to attempt to clear the blockage;
- If the obstruction cannot be cleared and exists within the Nova Scotia Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal right-of-way call the Municipality during regular business hours at (902) 667-2313;
- If the blockage is on private property it is the homeowner's responsibility to take the necessary measures to correct the problem. If a building service connection is to be excavated or modified a permit must be filed with this office. This permit is available on the Municipality's website;
- If the obstruction is in the Nova Scotia Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal right-of-way the Municipality will rectify the matter;
- Residential and commercial building service connection blockage are not considered emergencies however if it is determined that a blocked sewermain is resulting in the backup call the Municipality's after hours emergency number - (902) 667-2358.

Inflow & Infiltration

What is the impact of unpolluted water entering a sanitary sewer system?

The sewer servicing your home is a sanitary sewer. It is designed to transport and dispose of wastewater which has impurities that require treatment prior to release to the environment. The treatment of sewage not only protects the environment but more importantly prevents the spread of disease within a community. The quantity of water flowing through the sewer system and treated

at the wastewater treatment plant servicing your community is proportional to the cost of operation.

Unpolluted water can enter the sewer through sump pumps, floor drains, roof drains, heat pump discharges, etc. Although these unpolluted discharges are illegal, many people are unaware of this and have utilized the sanitary sewer as a convenient disposal option. Unfortunately as more and more people discharge unpolluted water to the sewer the daily sewage flow increases. Increased flow results in increased power costs, increased repair cost and most importantly increased capital costs.

If too many people make illegal connections to the sewer, especially sump pump connections, the sewer system may not be able to treat the sewage flows properly or the sewer system may overflow during wet weather. When this occurs repeatedly, regulatory agencies will require the sewer system undergo major overhauls. These types of upgrades are sized based on sewage flow and cost millions of dollars. As senior government funding decreases, the portion of the capital costs recovered directly from users increases; this has a significant impact on the cost of providing sewer service.

What should I do now?

- Disconnect and reroute sump pumps to a natural discharge location;
- Reroute roof drains if connected to the sewer;
- Plug or reroute floor drains if connected to the sewer;
- Redirect heat pump discharges if connected to the sewer;
- Contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

New Sewer Installations

File an Application

You must first file an Application to Connect or Modify a Service Connection with the Municipal Engineer.

Fax

(902) 667-1352 (Attn: Director of Engineering & Operations)

Mail

Director of Engineering & Operations,
1395 Blair Lake Rd,
Amherst, NS,
B4H 3Y4

Shipping

E.D. Fullerton Municipal Building
1395 Blair Lake Rd
Amherst, NS,
B4H 3Y4

Where an existing building service connection does exist (from the main sewer to the property line):

If there is an existing service connection servicing a property, the owner may utilize this exiting service upon satisfactory pre-inspection by the Municipality. If you require a pre-inspection please contact us to arrange for the pre-inspection of the existing building service connection by municipal staff. You may make connection upon notification from the Engineer that this is permissible. There is no cost associated with a pre-inspection.

Where no building service connection exists (from the main sewer to the property line):

There are two possible courses of action where a building service connection has not been installed to the property line. They are as follows:

- Upon payment of a flat connection fee as prescribed in the Municipality's policy respecting Building Service Connection Installation and Inspection Fees the Municipality will undertake all work necessary for the installation of the line from the main sewer line to the edge of the property line;

Or

- In lieu of the Municipality installing the building service connection the owner of a property may contract these services privately. The Public Sewers By-Law established conditions that must be met by private contractors in order to undertake this service.

Work between the property line and the building:

Upon satisfactory inspection of an existing connection or completion of a new connection, work may commence to connect the building to the building service connection located at the property line. The Public Sewers By-Law established conditions that must be met in order to permit work between the property line and building.

Contact us if you have any questions or require further information.

Sewer Assessments

- Assessments
- Sewer User Unit Assessment

Appeals

Any right of Appeal provided in the Public Sewers By-Law may be exercised by the Owner or person effected giving written notice to the Engineer of the intention to appeal and the nature of the decision, notice or other matter being appealed. The Clerk shall fix a date for the hearing of the Appeal by Council. The hearing of the Appeal shall be as timely and informal as circumstances permit, and shall respect the principals of natural justice including the right to be heard. Such appeals can be forwarded to the Engineer if sent to:

Director of Engineering & Public Works
E. D. Fullerton Municipal Building
1395 Blair Lake Road,
Amherst, NS B4H 3Y4

municipality of cumberland

Sewer Main Flushing Operations

Sample Notice to Residents

Please be advised the Municipality of the County of Cumberland will be conducting sewer flushing operations starting on **start date** and continuing until **end date** in the Village of **system id here**. This operation is to remove grit, sand and gravel from sewer piping which prevents sewer blockages, odor generation and premature wear of mechanical components.

Please follow these precautions to prevent and/or control possible backflows from the sewer:

1. ensure all toilet seats are down;

2. avoid using washroom facilities when works department crews are within sight of your home;

3. place bath towels around the base of toilets to absorb any overflowing water;
4. plug all sinks when not in use;

5. ensure the washing machine hose connection is tightly connected (a rag can be used to fill the gap between the washer hose and the drain pipe);

6. if water does overflow a fixture, clean the area with a disinfecting cleanser, wash soiled towels and other cleaning rags with a small quantity of Javex added to the wash water and contact the local municipal crew as soon as possible to prevent further overflows.

I would like to apologize in advance for any inconvenience this may cause however this is a required portion of routine sewer maintenance.
No high pressure sewer flushing is currently being conducted. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this matter please contact me at (902) 667-2313.

Sincerely,
Director of Engineering & Operations

Disconnect from a Public Sewer

File an Application

You must first file an Application to Disconnect from Public Sewer System with the Municipal Engineer.

Fax

(902) 667-1352
(Attn: Director of Engineering & Operations);

Mail

Director of Engineering & Operations,
E. D. Fullerton Municipal Building
1395 Blair Lake Rd,
Amherst, NS,
B4H 3Y4

Where a building has been removed from the property

1. The owner must obtain a demolition permit from the Municipality and complete the demolition. The building service connection must then be excavated to a minimum depth of 300 mm being 1.2 m outside the foundation wall and capped using a gasketed, water tight cap approved by the engineer.

2. Once the building service connection is capped but prior to backfilling call (902) 667-2313 to arrange for inspection (please note sewer charges will not be reduced if an inspection has not been completed); there is no charge for this inspection.

3. The work can be bedded in Type I gravel and backfilled upon written notice of the Engineer.

Where the building is being converted to a storage building or other proposed usage not requiring sewer service:

1. The owner must obtain approval for the change in usage including a development permit from the Municipality;

2. Remove all plumbing fixtures and waste piping from the building; and

3. Follow the procedure set out in section (1) above for disconnection of the building service connection a minimum 1.2 meters outside the foundation of the building.