

WATER SEWER SERVICE LINE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The City is proud to announce that over 4,000 residents have signed up for the Water/Sewer Service Line Assistance Program and the City has been actively identifying and fixing defects. Homeowners have no out of pocket expense beyond the monthly fee. Because of the overwhelming response to this program, we are now able to expand the program to all residential properties.

The following is a set of questions/answers that will allow you, as a participating member of this program, to make it successful for both you and the City.

Can I determine myself if the sewer line is broken?

Often, there is visible evidence of a sewer line failure. Some signs of a sewer line failure include:

- broken concrete in the street in front of your house
- erosion of the ground in the area of the service line
- a path of erosion from your house to the street, often including the front lawn, sidewalk, and street.

Visible evidence of a water line failure would be running water seeping from the ground.

If you notice any of these signs, you should contact the City at 586-445-3661 and select the Water Bill option. The City will need to make the actual determination of the problem and repair options.

A sewer back up is generally *not* an indication of a broken lateral. If a lateral is broke the fluids will seep into the ground, which is what causes the erosion. Backups are usually caused by line blockage from flushed material or tree roots.

What should I do if I have a problem with my sewer line?

If you believe the sewer line is clogged with tree roots or flushed material, you should contact a plumber and request that they clear the line. Clearing blockages are not a part of this program and the cost will be borne by the homeowner. You should make sure the plumber you hire is licensed, insured and reputable.

What should I do if the plumber advises the line is broken?

If your plumber determines the service line is broken, have them stop work immediately. The City has a contractor hired specifically for this program and our contractor is the only one who the City will be working with. If you have your own work performed outside of the City program, the City will not reimburse you or your plumber.

The City needs to determine if there is a break. A camera inspection by your plumber may provide this evidence, however the city will send a contractor to determine the exact location of the break. If it is broken, the city's contractor will repair or replace the service line, and any related sidewalk or road repairs, plus soil and seed restoration. The City will not reimburse you for expenses you pay to your plumber.

Does this program cover damage from sewer backups or other types of damage?

No. Damage from these types of incidents is still the responsibility of the homeowner and this program does not change that. You will still be responsible for interior damage from a sewer backup or water leak, landscaping repairs, tree and shrub replacement, sunken driveways, etc.

This program covers the cost to repair the water or sewer service line, replace any concrete or asphalt that needs to be torn out to get to the repair site and provide fill dirt and grass seed for grassy areas that are dug up. Restoration generally occurs 3-6 months after the repair to allow for settling.

What if I have limited access to my backyard?

The homeowner is responsible for gaining access to the dig location. This includes removing fences, landscaping, decks, etc. The homeowner may also be asked to sign a waiver from the contractor upon entering the property.

I have a multi-tenant property. Can I sign up?

Yes. Due to shared sewer laterals and water service lines, the \$6 per month fee will be per unit, not based on the number of water meters. For further information on enrolling contact City Hall. Properties assessed as 'apartment' are still excluded.

I am not a part of this program. Will the City fix my service lines?

If you are not a part of this program, you are responsible for your own repairs. If your damaged service line is affecting City streets or sidewalks, we will require you to complete the repairs. If you do not complete the repairs in a timely manner, the City will have the work performed on your behalf and bill you. If the billing is not paid, it will be placed on your taxes.

CITY OF EASTPOINTE

Water/Sewer Service Line Assistance Program

To provide our residents peace of mind and avoid large unexpected expenses, the City of Eastpointe introduced the Water/Sewer Service Line Assistance Program in August 2012. This program was expanded to include ***all*** residential property owners in 2014. This warranty program provides a voluntary method to pay a small monthly fee in exchange for protection against costly repairs for a sewer lateral or water service line failure.

As members of the public water and sewer systems, property owners are responsible to pay for the cost of service line repairs and improvements between the City's water and sewer lines and their home. When contracting with private plumbers, these costs can range from \$3,000 to \$8,000, often on short notice and under failed service conditions.

Property owners, who have not set aside money to pay for an unexpected expensive service line repair, now have an opportunity to obtain a low-cost program that will provide repairs for a small monthly fee of \$6, with no deductibles or service fees. The work will be performed to code by a City contractor.

Who is eligible?

Any residential property owner or multi-tenant owner (condo) if all units sign up.

What is covered by the program?

Water service line failures from the point of connection at the City water main to the water meter. Service will include repair or replacement of service line, any related sidewalk or road repairs, plus soil and seed restoration.

Sewer service lines (lateral) which are broken and leaking, from the point of exit from the home to the point of connection to the City sewer main. Service will include repair or replacement of service line, any related sidewalk or road repairs, plus soil and seed restoration.

What is not covered by the program?

Water service lines damaged by excavation activity and interior water damage.

Sewer service lines damaged by excavation activity or blockages caused by anything other than line breakage (i.e. tree roots, flushed material, etc.) or interior sewage backup damage.

Removal of flowers, bushes, trees, decks, porches, fences or garages prior to work commencing. Restoration of flowers, bushes, trees, decks, porches, fences or garages.

Is there any deductible or additional out-of-pocket expenses?

No. For the low monthly fee of \$6, this program covers the complete cost of repairs, contractor, permits and restoration.

Is the coverage in effect immediately?

Yes. If the City identifies a problem after coverage begins, you are covered.

No. To prevent harm to the City program, a two month delay will be implemented before any self-identified claim can be submitted. This will prevent someone identifying a service line

problem and then signing up for the program. These actions would drive up the program costs and force other program participants to subsidize unfair behavior.

Is the City forcing me to join this program?

No. This is voluntary participation.

After I sign up is the City going to increase my fee?

The City will continuously review the program revenues and expenses and reserves the right to change the fee through Council action. If a change is made, program participants will be provided a 60 day notice of any fee adjustments. This will allow time for cancellation if the participant deems the fee to be more than they wish to pay.

If I do not sign up for this program and I have a problem, then what?

If you are not a part of this program and you have a service line failure, you will need to make your own arrangements for repairs and payment. If the service line failure affects sidewalks, roads, an alley or other city infrastructure, the city will order the homeowner to make the repair. If the repair is not completed in a timely manner, the city will hire a contractor, have the work performed and bill the property owner. You will not be able to sign up *after* a failure has been identified.

How do I sign up?

Complete the form below and return to the Finance Department at City Hall. Billing will begin on the next water bill.

What if I want to cancel?

You may cancel with written notification to the Finance Department. If a sewer lateral or water service line failure occurs after cancellation, you will be required to pay for the repairs yourself. There is no credit given for prior participation. Cancellation of the program will be automatic upon transfer in property ownership.

I have received similar offers from other companies. Why should I choose the City's program?

The City's program is designed to cover costs, not make a profit. The City will cover both water service lines and sewer laterals for one fee. The City will be here to ensure the repairs are made when you need them.

Please sign me up for the City of Eastpointe's Water/Sewer Service Line Residential Protection Program. I acknowledge I have read and understand the program. I wish for the city to include the monthly program fee of \$6 on my water bill. For multi-tenant properties each unit owner must sign up for the program or none will be allowed to participate.

Property Owner Name _____

Property Address _____

Authorized Individual Name _____

Authorized Individual Signature _____

Signature Date _____ **Water Account** _____

Contact Phone Number _____