

# **OLIVEHURST PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT**

*Our mission is to provide high quality services to enhance our community's quality of life.*



## **Department of Public Works Residential Sewer – General Information**

### **What is a Sanitary Sewer System?**

The term "sanitary sewer" refers to sewer pipes that carry wastewater from your indoor plumbing, including sinks, clothes and dish washers, and bathrooms. There are three separate piping systems: the sewer (wastewater) systems, the drinking water system that supplies you with potable water, and the storm drain system that carries away rain water. These three systems are separate from one another both physically and legally for public health reasons. The Olivehurst Public Utility District operates drinking water and wastewater systems; the storm drain system is under the purview of the Yuba County Public Works Department.

### **How Olivehurst Public Utility District's Sewer System Works**

Wastewater in your house is collected in your interior plumbing pipes, which converge into one pipe just outside of your house. This one pipe is your "house" sewer pipe or lateral. The lateral carries the sewage from your house to a District sewer main, which is usually located in the middle of the street. A District sewer main carries sewage from the District sewer system and connects to a trunk sewer. The trunk sewers then carry the sewage to the Wastewater Treatment Plant, where it is treated.

### **Responsibility of the Property Owner**

In accordance with Olivehurst Public Utility District Ordinance, all house sewers and fixtures are to be maintained in a safe and sanitary condition by the owner of the property served, and all devices or safeguards required by the ordinance for the operation thereof maintained in good working order. The Olivehurst Public Utility District is responsible for the maintenance of the District sewer mains. Please be aware that the private lateral extends beyond the property line into the public street. A lateral is defined as part of the horizontal piping beginning 24 inches from the exterior wall of the building or structure and extending to its connection with the District sewer line.

### **Sanitary Sewer Overflows**

Sanitary Sewer Overflows (SSO) is the term used when wastewater is discharged from a sewer system through a manhole, cleanout or broken pipe. SSO can cause health hazards; damage to homes and businesses; and threaten the environment, local waterways, and beaches. The Olivehurst Public Utility District ensures that all sewer main lines are in good working condition by cleaning them on an annual basis. In addition, a Districtwide television inspection has also been performed to inspect all pipes. For further questions please feel free to contact Department of Public Works at (530) 743-8132.

### **Septic Tanks**

Septic tanks are underground tanks on private property that connect to a house sewer system. The tanks are not connected to the District sewer system; instead, wastewater is released into the ground through buried leach line pipes. If you are unsure if you have a septic tank, or are connected to the District sewer system, you can call the Public Works Department at (530) 743-8132. If you have a problem with a septic tank, it is suggested that you call a plumber with septic tank experience. If you have a septic tank, and are interested in connecting to the District sewer, please call the Public Works Department at (530) 743-8132. Installation of new septic tanks is prohibited under most circumstances.

## Dangers of Open Manholes

Although it may seem like fun, opening manhole covers is dangerous business. It creates a hazard for pedestrians and an attractive nuisance for small children and pets. **Opening manhole covers is prohibited. It is unsafe for anyone not properly equipped, trained and monitored to enter any manhole. Accumulations of gases can cause asphyxiation in an instant. There is no warning.** If you find an open manhole cover, report it immediately by calling (530) 743-4657 so that we can barricade the dangerous area.

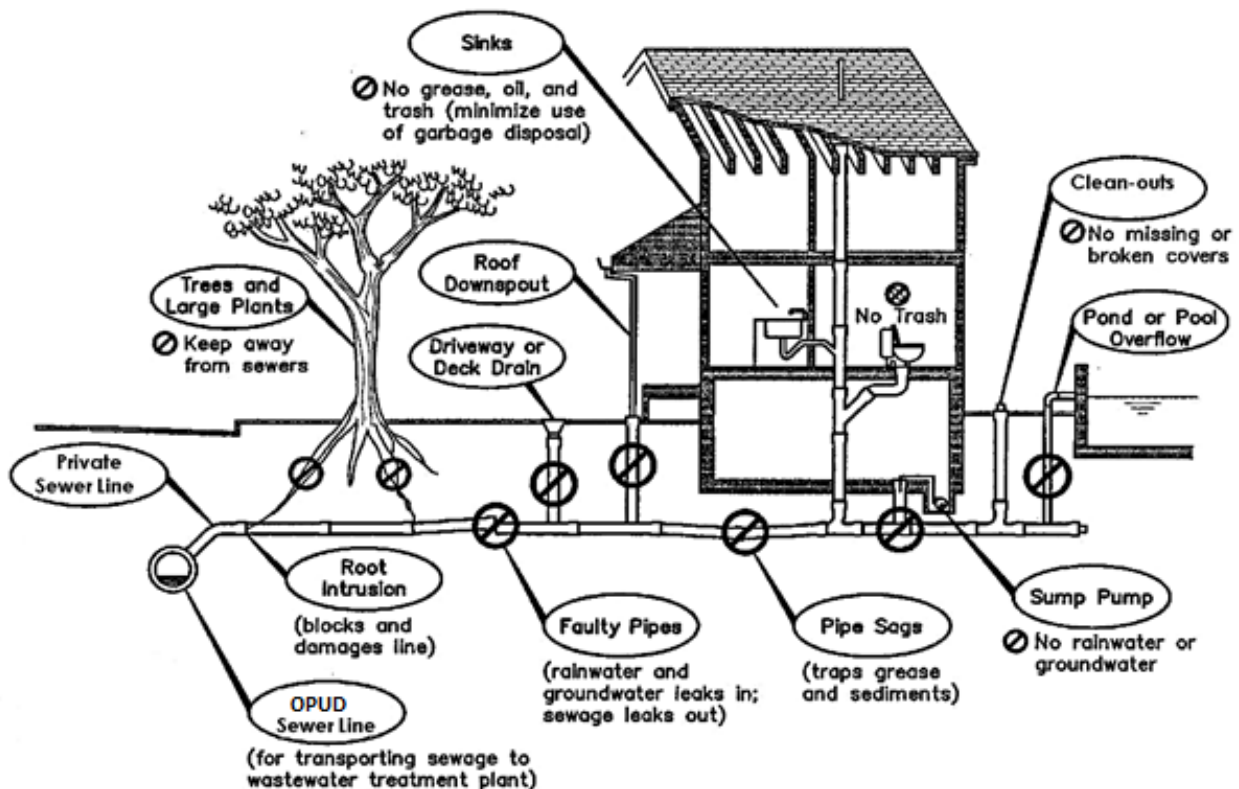
In case of street flooding, never open sewers to let water escape a flooded street. If you open a sanitary sewer, you run a great risk of causing a sewage backup in your own and your neighbor's homes or businesses. Additionally, opening a manhole is against the law. Call the Yuba County Public Works Department about street or ground water flooding at (530) 749-5420.

Authorized access to OPUD sanitary sewer is limited to:

- Olivehurst Public Utility District Public Works personnel
- Contractors hired by the Olivehurst Public Utility District

## Sewer Blockages

Sewer blockages can occur in your fixtures, in your interior plumbing pipes, or in your house sewer. Only very rarely is a problem caused by a blockage in the District system. When a blockage happens in the District system, the entire neighborhood can be affected. If a blockage is suspected, you should check your fixtures and your house sewer pipe. If you don't know how to do this, call a plumber for assistance. Common causes of blockages in the house sewer are roots in the pipe or grease build-up. A root cutting machine is used to clear a root blockage; and grease is usually removed with a plumber's snake.



## **Help Prevent Sewage Spills!**

**Keep grease, trash, rainwater and roots out of our sewer system!!**

## Preventive Maintenance of House Sewers

Here are just a few tips for ensuring that your house sewer lines are in good working order:

- Have your house sewer cleaned and inspected annually.
- Avoid planting trees and shrubs directly over or near your lateral. Certain plants have roots that are especially hard on the sewer. Examples are Poplar, Willow, Elm, Ash, Birch, Sycamore, Maple, Cottonwood, Russian Olive, Apple, Pear, Lilac, Honeysuckle, and Chokecherry.
- Avoid pouring grease, oil, lard, or similar materials into the sewer pipes. Once the grease cools, it solidifies and sticks to the walls of the pipe. These types of materials should be poured and stored in grease cans and disposed of properly.
- Except for toilet paper designed for the sewer system, avoid putting paper products into the sewer system, such as acne pads, feminine products, or baby wipes, which do not break down like toilet paper and therefore can cause blockages.
- Avoid letting hair into the system. Hair traps can be used in bathtubs and showers drains.
- Limit the materials that go into your garbage disposal. Anything that is too hard for your garbage disposal to break up, such as egg shells and fish bones, should be discarded in the trash and not in the pipes.
- Make sure cleaning cloths, diapers, and trash do not get into your pipes through the toilet.

## FAQ's about Sanitary Sewer Systems

1. Can I connect my patio drain, roof gutter downspout, pond/pool overflow drain or footing drain to any type of sanitary sewer line including my house sewer?

No, according to Olivehurst Public Utility District Ordinance, it is illegal and punishable.

2. Where can I legally drain water from my house to?

You can legally drain water towards the street. For more information, contact the Yuba County Public Works Department at (530) 749-5420.

3. Can I drain pool water into the street?

Please contact Yuba County Public Works at (530) 749-5420 for information about draining pool water into the street.

4. If my street is flooded, can I remove a manhole cover in order to help the water drain more quickly?

No. According to District Ordinance, it is illegal to open or enter a manhole for any reason.

5. Where can I find Olivehurst Public Utility District Ordinances?

You can contact the District Clerk's Office at (530) 743-0317.

6. What if I see sewage coming up from the manhole?

Keep people and pets away from the affected area. Untreated wastewater has high levels of viruses and bacteria.

If you notice a sewage spill, please call **(530) 743-4657**.