

## The Public Works Department

The 26 members of the Oak Forest Public Works Department are responsible for the maintenance of streets, street lighting, signs, sidewalks, water, sanitary sewers, ditches, storm sewers, culverts, parkway trees, public property, and city-owned vehicles. The department also oversees the operation of the Senior Bus program and coordinates the city's solid waste, recycling and environmental programs.

### The Utilities Division

The department's Utilities Division operates the city's sanitary sewer system. The division maintains nine sanitary sewer lift stations and 102 miles of sanitary sewer mains.

The Utilities Division is responsible for:

- Identifying and eliminating blockages in the sanitary sewer system.
- Maintaining sewer mains, drop sewers, manholes, and other components to ensure a safe and reliable sewer system.
- Maintaining sanitary sewer lift stations to ensure safe, reliable and efficient operation and service.

### Contacts

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# Sanitary Service Lines



*What you  
need to know*

## What is a sanitary service line?

The sanitary service line is the pipe that carries wastewater from your residence to the city's sanitary sewer main. In other words, **the service line serves you**, not the community.

## Who maintains the sanitary service line?

The service line connects your home to the city sewer. Therefore, **you are responsible for maintaining and repairing the service line** from your home to the hookup on the city's main line. The city is only responsible from the point where your line connects to the city's main sewer lines.

## What do I do if sewage backs up in my home?

If sewage backs up in a toilet or basement tub, and you believe the cause is outside of your house, **call Public Works**. A staff member will immediately come to your home to check the city's main sanitary sewer for a blockage. If the city's main line is blocked, Public Works will clear it at no expense to you. If you call a plumber before you call Public Works, the plumber's fee will be your responsibility even if the blockage is in the main sewer.

If the cause of the backup is somewhere in your service line, you will have to hire a **licensed plumber** to clear the blockage.

If you have a history of **tree root problems**, contact Public Works so it can televise the city-owned sanitary sewer main where your service line connects.

## How does Public Works inspect the city's sanitary sewer mains?

Public Works uses a **portable sewer camera** to inspect storm sewer and sanitary lines up to 60" in diameter. The remote-controlled camera can be driven into the pipe to inspect joints, service taps, tree roots, or any other obstruction in the line.

The **inspections are recorded** on DVD in order to document conditions and evaluate and schedule repair work. If problem areas are found, Public Works will provide you with the photos so that it can show your plumber the condition of the service line connection.

## What if there are tree roots in my sanitary service line?

Public Works will remove a tree only if it is necessary for you to **replace your service line**. To remove the tree, you will need a permit from the city's Building Department. Once your service line is replaced, Public Works will schedule the tree for replacement.

If you choose not to replace your service line but to simply **maintain your current line**, Public Works will not remove the tree. You may elect to remove and stump a tree, at your cost, only if it is one of the following types of trees: Silver Maple, Willow or Cottonwood.

**If you choose to remove a nuisance tree**, Public Works will replace it with a better species. You must remove the tree at your own expense. You also will need to obtain a permit from the city's Building Department.

## How can I prevent sewage backups in my basement?

A **sewer backup valve** can prevent backups by allowing sewage to flow in one direction – out of your home.

An **overhead sewer** prevents sewer water from backing up into your basement by lifting the sewer above the level of the basement floor.

**Many insurance policies do not cover sewer backups**. If you are not covered, please consider adding a rider for sewage backup.

## How do I report a problem or an emergency?

**To report a problem**, contact Public Works' customer service center at 708-535-4090.

**To report an emergency** after normal working hours or on holidays and weekends, contact the Oak Forest Police Department's non-emergency line at 708-687-1376. An on-call supervisor will be contacted.

To report a problem that is not an emergency, please complete the online service request form at [www.oak-forest.org](http://www.oak-forest.org). Your request will be entered into a database and an inspector will be dispatched to your home. **Initial contact usually occurs within 24 hours.**

**All requests are prioritized** by public health and/or safety, environmental impact, and severity of the problem requiring repair.