

Sanitary Sewer Maintenance Fee - FAQ's

1. Why is the fee needed?

In the past the property owner was responsible for any and all repairs to the sanitary sewer lateral which connects their home with the sanitary sewer in the street. If a problem were to occur within the street, homeowners on average would be facing a \$12,000.00 repair bill. This proved to be a severe hardship to many of these homeowners.

2. What is being changed and when does it take effect?

Beginning January 1, 2008, the City of Racine will take over responsibility for structural failures of the lateral within the street right-of-way.

3. What about cleaning of the lateral?

The homeowner is still responsible for the cleaning, removal of roots or deposits which may result in reduced flow or blockage of the lateral.

4. What is my \$50.00 paying for?

First and foremost, the property owner is no longer at risk of an unexpected major repair cost due to the failure of the sewer lateral which is located in the street right-of-way or city easement. Secondly, the City will proactively repair or replace suspect laterals in conjunction with major street projects. And, finally, the City will make repairs or replace the mainline sewer as its condition warrants.

5. What do I do if I am having a problem with my sewer lateral?

The first step is to hire a plumbing contractor. The plumbing contractor will investigate the problem. If the plumbing contractor believes that a structural failure exists and that it is located beyond the property line, they will contact the City Engineer's office at 636-9191.

If the City concurs that the problem is caused by a structural defect within the street right-of-way or city easement, then the City will make the needed repairs AT NO COST to the property owner.

6. What are the chances that my lateral will fail?

More than 50% of the homes in the City of Racine are older than 75 years. The average life of a sewer lateral is 100 years. Therefore, if nothing changed, we predict a significant increase in lateral failures over the next 25 years.

7. My lateral is new. How do I benefit from this project?

Excellent question. By proactively managing sanitary sewer laterals and mainline sewers in conjunction with our paving program, we save tax dollars. This benefits everyone. In addition, improved maintenance and timely replacement will reduce leakage of sewage which can make its way into our river and lake. A cleaner river and lake are a benefit everyone can enjoy.

8. My lateral failed outside of my property and the backup of sewage damaged my basement. Will the City reimburse me for this clean-up?

If the problem is found not to be on your property, the City will pay the reasonable cost to investigate and repair the problem. However, the City will not reimburse the cost of previous cleanings of the line or any damages caused to the building or its contents.