

Approved by Council: October 25, 2010

## **SANITARY SEWER BLOCKAGE POLICY**

### **BACKGROUND**

From time to time Town of Redcliff residents report blockages in the sanitary sewer line. Upon receiving notice from a property owner regarding a suspected blockage in a sanitary sewer line, the Public Services Department will attempt to resolve existing blockages, determine responsibility, and limit future occurrences as per this policy.

The Town of Redcliff recognizes the importance of maintaining a sanitary sewer system that operates efficiently and as trouble free as possible for their residents, however, the decisions to repair or replace any portion of the sanitary sewer system may be restricted by budget constraints of the Town of Redcliff.

### **POLICY**

Upon receiving the call from the property owner regarding a sanitary sewer blockage, the Public Services Department will attempt to determine whether the blockage originates on the service line or the sanitary main line.

#### **A. Sanitary Service Line Blockages**

If it is obvious that the blockage is in the service line, the Public Services Department will;

1. Offer to provide the homeowner with a plumbing snake to attempt to clear the blockage themselves. The plumbing snake will be available during business hours only. Request for use of plumbing snake after hours will result in an after hours fee established by the Town of Redcliff Rates Policy, or
2. The homeowner will be advised that they may contact a plumber or drain cleaning contractor to clear the blockage at their expense and that they will only be eligible for reimbursement from the Town of Redcliff for these costs as provided by this the Sanitary Sewer Blockage Policy No. 035.

**B. Responsibility for Maintenance of Sanitary Sewer Service Lines**

1. The property owner will be responsible for the maintenance and repair of the **entire service line between their building and the sanitary sewer main in the street** when the blockage is caused by any of the following;
  - grease
  - any material or object originating from the property owner side
  - tree roots from trees originating from private property
2. The property owner will be responsible for the maintenance and repair of the **service line located on their property** when the blockage is caused by physical pipe failures, faulty installations, or settlements on private property, including at the point of connection on or near the property line.
3. The Town of Redcliff will be responsible for the maintenance and repair of the **service line located on public property** when the blockage is caused by any of the following;
  - physical pipe failures, faulty installations, or settlements on public property
  - tree roots from trees originating on public property
4. The responsibility for maintenance and repairs to service lines will be determined by an investigation conducted by the Public Services Director or his designate, based on various contractor maintenance reports, property history, and video inspections of the service line.
5. If it is determined that the responsibility for repairs or maintenance is that of both the property owner and the Town of Redcliff, the Public Services Director will attempt to coordinate a repair or maintenance plan that is amicable to both parties.

**C. Sanitary Main Line Blockages**

If it is obvious that the blockage is in the Sanitary Main Line, the Public Services Department will immediately summons staff to respond to the blockage and clear the main line.

If there is a history of blockages in the section of the main line that experienced the blockage, the Public Services Department will investigate further by conducting a video inspection of the line. The Public Services Department will determine the likelihood of potential problems in the future with the main line and make recommendations as to the repair or maintenance of the main line. The recommendations may include repairing the main line, increasing the maintenance schedule, or recommend that no repair or additional maintenance of the main line is required.

**D. Video Inspection Services**

The Public Services Department will conduct video inspections for property owners for the purpose of investigating restrictions and failures in private sanitary sewer service lines. Inspections will be offered at the discretion of the Public Services Department and at no cost to the property owner when;

1. There is a demonstrated history of blockages in the service line.
2. There is reasonable evidence to indicate a restriction or blockage exists and can not be cleared.
3. There is reasonable evidence to indicate a structural failure in the service line may exist.

A property owner may request a video inspection of their sanitary sewer service line without substantiated evidence for a deposit fee of \$50.00.

If it is determined from the inspection that maintenance or repairs are required and the Town of Redcliff is responsible as per Section B of this policy, the property owner will be refunded the deposit fee.

If it is determined from the inspection that no maintenance or repairs are required, or if the property owner is responsible for the maintenance or repairs as per Section B of this policy, the deposit fee will not be refunded.