

ATTACHMENT 2

PINELLAS COUNTY
FLORIDA

PRIVATE SEWER LATERAL
PERMITTING POLICY

November 2021

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I. Intent

Pinellas County Utilities (PCU) is committed to protecting public health and the environment through effective management of our wastewater treatment facilities and wastewater collection system. Groundwater and surface water inflow and infiltration (I&I) entering the wastewater collection system takes up valuable sewer capacity, contributes to causes of sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs), and adds costs for excess wastewater treatment. Defective private sanitary sewer laterals allow a significant amount of I&I into the wastewater collection system, and therefore, Pinellas County institutes this Private Sewer Lateral Permitting Policy (Permitting Policy).

The Private Sewer Lateral Permitting Policy has a dual purpose: 1) support removal of I&I from the PCU wastewater collection system, and 2) verify that the private sanitary sewer lateral is in good working order per [Section 22-296](#) of the Pinellas County Code. Permitting Policy implementation uses the building permit application process to initiate an inspection of private sanitary sewer laterals and require lateral repairs, if necessary. Applicable permits include any improvements that may result in an increase in wastewater discharge into PCU's wastewater collection system from the private sanitary sewer lateral. The private sanitary sewer lateral inspection is part of the building permit application process.

The goal of the Permitting Policy is to reduce the amount of groundwater infiltration and surface water inflow entering PCU's wastewater collection system from defective privately owned sanitary sewer laterals. Reducing the amount of groundwater infiltrating into the wastewater collection system through defective laterals will aid in reducing the risk of SSOs, reducing extraneous flow to treatment facilities, and increasing available system capacity.

II. Definitions

Cleanout means a segment of pipe connected to an underground private Sewer Lateral and rising to the surface, providing access to the sewer lateral for purposes of inspection and cleaning.

County Sewer System (System) consists of the County owned collection and transmission system that conveys the wastewater to the treatment facility. This consists of sanitary sewers, trunk sewers, interceptors, lift stations, force mains, and all appurtenances between the private Sewer Laterals (or building sewers) and the wastewater treatment facility.

Defective means, as applied to a Private Sewer Lateral, a Private Sewer Lateral for which any of the following conditions exist upon inspection by a licensed plumbing contractor or other competent professional:

1. evidence of pipe or joint cracks or deterioration,
2. root intrusion into a pipe,
3. a misaligned pipe segment, sag, or lack of positive gradient,
4. a lack of a necessary cleanout cap,
5. a downspout, drain, defective cleanout, or other connection that allows storm water or other extraneous water to enter the sanitary sewer system, and/or

6. a defect (e.g., crack, fracture, hole, open joint) or active leak that allows the discharge of sewage on the property or the introduction of extraneous water into the County sewer system.

Infiltration means groundwater that enters a sewer system, including service connections, through defective pipes, pipe joints, connections, service connections, manholes, or pump stations. Infiltration does not include, and is distinguished from inflow.

Inflow means surface water and stormwater that enters a collection/transmission system, including service connections, from sources such as roof leaders, cellar drains, yard drains, area drains, drains from wet areas, foundation drains, cross connections between storm sewers and sanitary sewers, catch basins, stormwater, surface runoff, manhole covers, or drainage. Inflow does not include, and is distinguished from, infiltration.

Licensed Plumbing Contractor means a plumber licensed and insured in the State of Florida pursuant to Chapter 553 and Section 489.105, Florida Statutes.

PCU-Prequalified Plumber/Contractor is licensed plumber or contractor that meets the requirements specified by Pinellas County Utilities for registration as prequalified, which includes defined qualification criteria, an active license, familiarity with standard drawings and specifications and submittal requirements associated with this policy and providing a warranty for a minimum of one (1) year.

Private Collection and Transmission Systems (Private sewer system) are privately owned sanitary sewers, manholes, lift stations, force mains and any other facility that discharges into the County sewer system excluding single-family residences.

Private Collection and Transmission Systems (Private sewer system) Operating Permit is a permit from the County provided to owners of a private sewer system allowing the private owner to discharge wastewater into the County sewer system that includes terms and conditions and performance requirements for the owner to maintain and operate their system in accordance with County requirements.

Private Sewer Lateral means a pipe that carries wastewater, excluding storm, surface and ground water starting just outside the building and ending at the right-of-way or recorded easement, and connects directly to the County System.

Private Sewer Lateral maintenance means the routine inspection, flushing, rodding, and removal of grease, roots, and debris of a private Sewer Lateral located within private property up to the right-of-way to maintain a free-flowing condition.

Property means any real property, or portion thereof, located in the County, including buildings or structures and private sewer infrastructure situated on the surface or beneath the surface of the property, including the private Sewer Lateral up to the right-of-way.

Rehabilitation, as applied to private Sewer Laterals, means the lining of the complete length of the private Sewer Lateral with a cured-in-place pipe (CIPP) liner to bring the private Sewer Lateral into compliance with minimum functional requirements. This also includes any other work necessary to prepare the pipe for lining.

Replacement, as applied to private Sewer Laterals, means the installation of a complete new private Sewer Lateral and cleanout.

Sanitary Sewer Overflow (SSO) means a wastewater overflow from a manhole, a confined repair site, or directly onto the ground from a cleanout, or from the sanitary collection and transmission system (regardless of volume) within the County.

Smoke Testing involves pushing a simulated, non-toxic, non-staining simulated smoke through a community's sanitary sewer collecting system, then observing and documenting where the smoke exits. This method for identifying I&I typically involves residential, commercial, and industrial areas. Field technicians set up a blower over a neighborhood manhole, and non-toxic simulated smoke is pumped through the sewer line. The exiting smoke can indicate the location of a broken sewer pipe, manholes, catch basins, or where roof or foundation drains are connected to the sewer system.

III. Policy Applicability

The Permitting Policy applies to single-family residential property owners connected directly to the County sewer system and are within the permitting authority of Pinellas County Building Services.

The Permitting Policy will become effective October 1, 2022.

IV. Permitting Policy Requirements

The Permitting Policy requires property owners to engage a licensed plumbing contractor to inspect, and, if necessary, repair, replace, or line their private sanitary sewer laterals when applying for a building permit that includes:

- A. Additional Plumbing Fixtures:** The addition, replacement, or relocation of a plumbing fixture, bathtub with shower or whirlpool tub or shower pan, or urinals, toilets, sinks, or trench drains that would increase wastewater flows into the PCU sanitary sewer system.
- B. 50 Percent Rule:** This is based on improvements that are substantial as calculated by the FEMA 50% rule based on the property evaluation currently maintained by the Pinellas County Property Appraiser's Office.
- C. Additional Square Footage: 70 square feet or more** additional square footage is added to an existing residential building because additional occupants would increase wastewater flows to the sanitary sewer lateral.
- D. Demolition/Rebuild:** An inspection will be required if a building is to be demolished and the lateral is to be kept in place. If a building has already been demolished and a new building is being constructed, any existing lateral being utilized will require inspection including those under slabs per the building code.

Property owners who have had their private laterals either installed, replaced, or have an inspection demonstrating that the lateral is not defective within the last 10 years are exempt from this policy.

V. Private Sewer Lateral Inspection Requirements

A private Sewer Lateral inspection involves the use of a closed-circuit television (CCTV) camera and is conducted according to PCU specifications by a licensed plumbing contractor. Smoke testing is not considered an acceptable inspection method.

A defective sewer lateral is one that is not in good working order. The lateral is deemed defective, for the purposes of this policy, if any of the following conditions exist upon inspection:

- evidence of pipe or joint cracks or deterioration,
- root intrusion into a pipe,
- a severely misaligned pipe segment, sag, or lack of positive gradient,
- a lack of necessary cleanout cap,
- a downspout, drain, defective cleanout, other connection that allows storm water or other extraneous water to enter the County sewer system, and/or
- a defect (e.g., crack or hole) or active leak that allows the discharge of sewage onto the property or the introduction of extraneous water into the County sewer system.

If the private Sewer Lateral is found to be defective, the private Sewer Lateral must be fully replaced as quickly as possible, but no longer than 365 calendar days after the initial finding that the private Sewer Lateral is defective. Lining of the entire lateral may be allowed under certain conditions and must be approved by PCU. All corrective action work must be performed in accordance with County specifications by a licensed plumbing contractor and all applicable permits and fees are the responsibility of the property owner.

The requirements of this policy will not interfere with the processing of the original building permit application that triggered the private lateral inspection.

VI. Responsibility for Payment

The private Sewer Lateral inspection and related or subsequent replacement, or lining costs (corrective measures) and post construction inspection are the responsibility of the property owner/applicant. The corrective repairs or improvements shall meet PCU specifications. Additionally, the property owner must apply for applicable building permits for repairs or replacement of the lateral.

Affected property owners may choose to apply for a rebate for the inspection and/or subsequent replacement or lining as applicable and in accordance with the PCU Private Sewer Lateral Rebate Policy.

If a property owner opts to apply for a rebate, they must meet additional requirements stipulated in the Rebate Policy. The ability to utilize the Rebate Policy is at the discretion of PCU and as funding is available.

VII. Policy Enforcement

Policy enforcement shall be as set forth in [Pinellas County Code Chapter 126 Sections 126-400-406](#) and [Pinellas County Code Chapter 1 Sections 1-8](#).

VIII. Policy Impact

The effectiveness of the Permitting Policy is evaluated based on property owners' permitting process through the Pinellas County Building Services. The overall effectiveness of reducing I&I throughout the PCU wastewater collection system depends on whether participation rates are low or high, and whether sanitary sewer lateral lining or replacement work is clustered or dispersed. This policy, in conjunction with other private Sewer Lateral policies, provides PCU the best opportunity to reduce I&I in the PCU wastewater collection system and help protect the environment and public health from SSOs.