

ATTACHMENT 4

PINELLAS COUNTY
FLORIDA

PRIVATE SEWER SYSTEM
POLICY

November 2021

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I. Intent

The purpose of the Private Sewer System Policy (System Policy) is to require all privately owned collection and transmission systems (private Sewer Systems) to obtain operation permits and, any applicable utility permits to ensure proper design, construction, operation, and maintenance of new and existing privately-owned collection and transmission systems that discharge to the County's wastewater collection system. [Pinellas County Code 126-301](#) requires all new or altered collection systems (private or public) connected to the Pinellas County Utilities' (PCU) wastewater collection system to conform to Pinellas County standard technical specifications. Additionally, [Pinellas County Code 126-327 \(5\)](#) prohibits the discharge of stormwater, surface water, roof runoff, subsurface drainage, and other water sources into the County's wastewater collection system. Through the System Policy, PCU improves its tracking and enforcement capabilities to ensure the wastewater collection system's health and longevity, to reduce the risk of sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs), and to preserve public health.

The goals of the System Policy are to reduce inflow and infiltration (I&I) entering PCU's wastewater collection system from private Sewer Systems, and to reduce the risk of blockage or equipment failure related spills from privately-owned infrastructure. Reducing the amount of groundwater infiltrating into the wastewater collection system will aid in reducing the risk of SSOs, reducing extraneous flow to treatment facilities, and increasing available system capacity. Additionally, this Policy allows for existing Private Sewer Systems to transfer ownership to PCU under certain conditions.

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 wastewater to the treatment facility. The system consists of sanitary sewers, trunk sewers, interceptors, sewer pump 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 of 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.

Repair means the replacement of existing work with the same kind of material used in the existing work, not including additional work that would change the structural safety of the building or that would affect or change required exit facilities, a vital element of elevator, plumbing, gas piping, wiring, or heating

installations, or that would be in violation of a provision of law, or provision of County ordinance. The term "repair" shall not apply to any change of construction. The term "repair" as applied to private Sewer Laterals means construction activities performed on a portion of the private Sewer Lateral to bring the private Sewer Lateral into compliance with minimum functional requirements.

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 System Policy will apply to all existing and future private Sewer Systems discharging to the Pinellas County wastewater collection system as well as any proposed privately constructed wastewater collection facilities. The intent of this policy is to add more specific requirements to the County Sewer System Code for private Sewer Systems to include inspection, operation, and management requirements as well as providing for construction and operation permitting requirements by PCU.

The owner or developer of any site development is required to build public wastewater collection systems for any wastewater collection system facilities to be constructed in public easement or right-of-way.

IV. Permit Applications and Performance Standards

PCU will develop permit application forms, fees, and performance standards to be incorporated into all private Sewer System construction and operating permits.

V. Review of Design Standards

PCU will review and revise as necessary the following design and construction standards for gravity sewers, sewer pump stations, and force mains relevant to private Sewer Systems:

- Pinellas County Standard Technical Specifications for Utilities and Related Construction
- Pinellas County Material Specification Manual
- Pinellas County Standard Engineering Details
- Pinellas County Pump Station Standards

VI. Utility Permit

In accordance with current PCU Policy, a utility permit is required for a new or a modification to an existing private Sewer System. All new private Sewer Systems, where allowed, are to be gravity only unless otherwise approved in accordance with current PCU Policy.

VII. Operating Permit

Any person or entity owning a private Sewer System will obtain a three (3)-year renewable operating permit from PCU. The operating permit will include details of provision enforcement, set forth in [Pinellas County Code Section 126-400](#). When submitting a renewal application, the owner of the private Sewer System is required to submit copies of the following:

- **Operation and Maintenance Records** – The operation and maintenance records for the three-year period prior to the operating permit renewal application submittal date must be provided.

Operation and maintenance records must be maintained for two reporting cycles. Records include daily run times, recorded either electronically or manually, and any inspections (other than the any inspection conducted by PCU) and/or cleaning and resulting repairs.

PCU, at its discretion, may request certain operating records at any time. Requested records must be submitted to PCU within a month of the request unless an extension is granted by PCU.

- **Private Sewer Pump Station Service and Maintenance Agreement** – All private Sewer Systems that include a sewer pump station must have a maintenance agreement with a person or company holding a State of Florida master plumbing certificate of competency, a Pinellas County master plumber certificate of competency, a certified wastewater operator, licensed in the State of Florida, or be a person approved by PCU for such work.

The maintenance agreement will provide for monthly inspections of the sewer pump station to ensure proper operation and maintenance and provide 24-hour emergency restoration services if a failure occurs.

- **Sanitary Sewer Overflow Response Plan (SSORP)** – The SSORP must adhere to United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) guidance and include response to and remediation of SSOs caused by, but not limited to, line failure, line collapse, line obstruction, power failure and/or mechanical failure. When an SSO occurs within the owner's private Sewer System, the owner is responsible for notifying PCU and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) within 24 hours of becoming aware of the SSO.
- The owner will clean up SSOs or spills as soon as possible after discovery in accordance with all applicable local and state regulations and take appropriate measures to correct issues that caused the SSO or spill at no cost to the County.
- **Emergency and/or Backup Power Plan** – The private Sewer System owner will have a back-up power plan with protocols for managing flows during a power outage to prevent SSOs from occurring. This plan shall meet current State and PCU requirements.

VIII. Private Sewer System Inspections

PCU will inspect all private Sewer Systems periodically to ensure the integrity of the system. An inspection fee and re-inspection fee will be established by resolution of the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners (the Board). These fees will be assessed for each collection system inspection and re-inspection. The wastewater collection system inspections may include:

- Examination of service records, plans, and agreements required by permit
- Evaluation of compliance with operation and maintenance requirements
- Review of the results of any internal inspections or assessments
- Review of data provided for evidence of excessive I&I, such as pump run times.

PCU will issue an inspection report including any required corrective actions.

IX. Private Sewer System Infiltration and Inflow (I&I) and Corrective Actions

If there is reasonable evidence that there may be excessive I&I within the private Sewer System, PCU, at its discretion and cost, may install a flow meter or any other measurement device at the point of connection to determine whether a private Sewer System is allowing excessive amounts of I&I to enter the County's wastewater collection system.

PCU will have the right to access the flow meter or other measurement device at any time to perform meter readings or for maintenance.

Should PCU determine that excessive amounts of I&I are entering the County wastewater collection system from a private Sewer System, the owner of the private Sewer System is responsible for determining the cause(s). The private Sewer System owner also is responsible for planning, designing, and constructing all necessary repairs or replacements to the system, and securing applicable state and PCU construction permits. All work will be completed by a qualified licensed contractor and inspected by PCU. Post-construction flow monitoring (at the original monitoring location) will be conducted by PCU at the property owner's expense to demonstrate the effectiveness of the mitigation measures. All repairs and improvements made to remediate for I&I will be done at no cost to the County.

X. Transfer of Ownership of an Existing Private Sewer System

PCU will allow for the owner of a private Sewer System to request the County to take ownership of a private Sewer System. After reviewing the owner's application and finding that the owner has met the requirements contained herein, the County may accept a transfer of ownership and responsibility for the private Sewer System.

Before the County takes ownership of any private Sewer System, the owner must establish that the wastewater collection system, including pump stations and other equipment, meet all requirements of the Pinellas County's Standard Technical Specifications, Material Specification Manual, and Standard

Details. The County may, if it is deemed in the best interest of the County and its residents, decide to allow for a transfer of ownership if the wastewater collection system does not meet current County standards.

Before the County takes ownership of any private Sewer System, the owner shall also have the private Sewer System evaluated to establish that it meets or surpasses the standards set forth in the Pinellas County's Standard Technical Specifications. The evaluation shall be done in accordance with the procedures set forth in the Pinellas County's Standard Technical Specifications unless otherwise allowed by the County. If the owner is not able to pay for the system evaluation, the County may elect to pay for the testing or forego the testing.

The transfer of all private property associated with the private Sewer System shall be evidenced by a good and sufficient bill of sale in a form acceptable to the County and shall be free and clear of any claims or encumbrances.

The County shall determine the extent to which a transfer of real property associated with the private Sewer System may be accomplished by easement or by conveyance of a fee interest. All easements shall be conveyed by good and sufficient easement deeds in a form acceptable to the County. All fee interests shall be conveyed by warranty deed. Regardless of whether an easement or fee is conveyed, the conveyance shall be free of any claims or encumbrances. Further, the owner of the private Sewer System shall provide the County with a survey in recordable form describing any interest in real property which the owner proposes to convey to the County. If the owner is not able to pay for the survey, the County may elect to pay for the survey.

The owner will pay all cost or expenses, including but not limited to attorney's and engineering fees, which the County incurs to accomplish the transfer of ownership of a private Sewer System.

XI. Policy Enforcement

Provisions under this policy shall be enforced as set forth set forth in [Pinellas County Code Section 126-400](#).

XII. Policy Impact

This anticipated impact of this policy is to reduce I&I and O&M-related SSOs from private Sewer Systems and to reduce I&I entering the County sewer system, which, in turn, will reduce the risk of SSOs in the County sewer system and reduce peak flows at the WWFs.