

**CITY OF SIMI VALLEY SEWER LATERAL POLICY – EFFECTIVE DATE: 03/03/2003**

This Sewer Lateral Policy establishes various criteria and verification procedures necessary for the City to ascertain whether plumbing expenses for the sewer lateral line repairs are reimbursable to the property owner.

The main sewer line in the street is owned and maintained by the City. However, the connecting sewer lateral line running from the house/building to the main sewer line in the street is owned and maintained by the property owner. It is the responsibility of the property owner to properly maintain the sewer lateral line. Internal problems in the sewer lateral line, such as internal blockages, misalignments, or deterioration, are the property owner’s responsibility.

Tree roots themselves are not generally able to penetrate a properly maintained sewer lateral line without a pre-existing entryway. Inferior materials, poor installation and/or maintenance may cause the sewer lateral line and/or seals to decay, disintegrate or otherwise deteriorate, loosen joints, develop fissures, spaces, openings, and/or other potential entryways for tree roots: such entryways may leak and discharge sewage into the ground, in violation of the City of Simi Valley Municipal Code, Section 6-6.06.

If a property owner believes that roots from a City-owned tree may have caused damage to a properly maintained and sealed sewer lateral line, and wishes to be reimbursed for the necessary repair/replacement work, the property owner must complete the following steps so that the City may investigate, verify the facts, and evaluate the circumstances:

1. If sewer lateral line repair/replacement work is to be done within the public right-of-way, the property owner or contractor/plumber must first obtain an Encroachment Permit from the Public Works Department. **Whether the sewer line lateral repair/replacement work is to be done within private property or public right-of-way, the property owner or contractor/plumber must notify the City’s Sanitation Division personnel at (805) 583-6440, 24-hours prior to such work, for the City’s inspection of the roots and sewer lateral line. If this step is not followed, the City’s staff will be unable to confirm the cause of the problem, and the property owner will not receive reimbursement consideration.**
2. All sewer lateral line work must follow the City’s guidelines for evacuation, including the City’s “Procedures for Trenching or Construction Near Trees” available through the Public Works Department.
3. The property owner or contractor/plumber must, in the presence of the City Inspector(s), uncover the sewer lateral line, not removing it or any roots, in order to allow for proper inspection and tracing of tree roots. The City Inspector(s) will check the sewer lateral line for its condition, including whether improperly sealed or failed joints, pipe damage or deterioration have caused root entryways. The inspection will also include review of the type and age of pipe materials, the proper installation and maintenance, and whether earthquake movement may have damaged the sewer lateral line or otherwise caused root entryways, as the City is not responsible for the consequences of earthquakes or sewer lateral line deterioration.
4. In the event that the City Inspector determines that a City-owned tree has caused damage to an otherwise properly maintained and sealed sewer lateral line, the City will request a reasonable cost estimate from a qualified and appropriately licensed, insured, and bonded contractor/plumber, for the repair work. The City will consider reimbursement for only that portion of the sewer lateral line repair work damaged by City property.

**WHERE THERE IS NO INSPECTION, THERE IS NO REIMBURSEMENT! However none of the above is intended to preclude the property owner or contractor/plumber from cleaning the sewer lateral line to reestablish drainage.**

Should you have any questions or need further assistance, please do not hesitate to call (805) 583-6440. I have received a copy of the City of Simi Valley Sewer Lateral Policy:

SIGNATURE: RESIDENT/PROPERTY OWNER	ADDRESS	PHONE NUMBER
DATE	ISSUED BY	DATE