

POLICY 26-03

SANITARY SERVICE LINE BLOCKAGE POLICY

DATE OF ADOPTION:	February 17, 2026	MOTION NUMBER:	#26/02/17
DATE OF AMENDMENT:		DEPARTMENT:	Infrastructure & Planning

PURPOSE

To establish clear, consistent, and fair guidelines for the investigation, responsibility, and cost allocation associated with obstructions and repairs to sanitary wastewater service lines. This policy provides direction to Town staff and property owners regarding their respective roles and responsibilities for maintaining and repairing sanitary service connections.

DEFINITIONS

CAO is the Chief Administrative Officer of the Town of Vermilion.

Director is a person employed by the Town who is in charge of an activity, department, or organization, as delegated by the CAO.

Employee is an employee of the Town of Vermilion.

Municipal Portion is the section of the sanitary Service Line extending from the wastewater main to the property line.

Property Line is the legal boundary of a parcel of land as shown on a registered survey or land title. For the purposes of this policy, the property line is the dividing point between the Municipal Portion and the Private Portion of the sanitary Service Line, regardless of the location of buildings, cleanouts, sidewalks, or landscaping.

Private Portion is the section of the sanitary Service Line extending from the premises to the property line.

Property Owner is the registered owner of the property receiving sanitary service from the Town.

Service Line is the sanitary wastewater pipe connecting a property to the municipal wastewater main.

Town is the Town of Vermilion in the Province of Alberta.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all sanitary Service Lines connected to the Town's wastewater system and to all Property Owners receiving sanitary service from the Town. The Town will not cover costs associated with obstructions on the Private Portion of the sanitary Service Line, including those caused by grease, ice, tree roots or foreign objects introduced from within the premises. Property owners are responsible for preventing such obstructions through the proper use, operation, and maintenance of their sanitary Service Lines.

TASK	TITLE OR DEPARTMENT OF PERSON RESPONSIBLE
APPROVAL OF POLICY & AMENDMENTS	Council
HANDLING INQUIRIES & COMMUNICATING POLICY	Director of Infrastructure & Planning
MONITORING REVIEWS & IMPLEMENTATION	Chief Administrative Officer

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 1) The Town is responsible for maintaining and repairing the Municipal Portion of the sanitary Service Line.
- 2) Property Owners are responsible for maintaining and repairing the Private Portion of the sanitary Service Line.
- 3) Obstructions shall be investigated promptly to minimize risk to public health, safety, and property.
- 4) Repair costs shall be allocated fairly based on the location and cause of the obstruction as determined by the Town.
- 5) Clear communication between the Town and property owners is essential to timely resolution.

INVESTIGATION OF OBSTRUCTIONS

- 6) In the event of a blockage in a sanitary service line, the property owner is responsible for contacting a licensed plumber to investigate and clear the obstruction.
- 7) Upon notification that an obstruction may be present on the municipal portion of the service line, the Town will investigate to determine the cause and location of the reported obstruction.
- 8) Investigations may include site visits, camera inspections, or other diagnostic methods as deemed appropriate by the Town.
- 9) Common causes of obstruction may include, but are not limited to:
 - a) Grease
 - b) Ice
 - c) Foreign objects
 - d) Tree roots on any section of the service line

DETERMINATION OF RESPONSIBILITY AND COSTS

10) Municipal Portion of the Service Line

- a) If the obstruction is confirmed to be located between the property line and the wastewater main, the Town will:
 - i. Assume responsibility for the repair
 - ii. Cover the full cost of labour, materials, and associated service work.

11) Private Portion of the Service Line

- a) If the obstruction is confirmed to be located between the premises and the property line, the Town shall not be responsible for any repairs or costs associated. The Property Owner shall:
 - i. Engage a licensed private contractor to complete the repairs
 - ii. Assume all costs associated with the repair

12) Shared Responsibility

- a) If the obstruction exists on both the Municipal Portion and Private Portions of the Service Line:

- i. When the Town is advised of the blockage, the Town will determine a fair apportionment of repair costs between the Town and the Property Owner.
- ii. Cost allocation will be based on costs, location, cause, and extent of the obstruction
- iii. The Town's decision regarding apportionment shall be final and there is no appeal process.

NOTIFICATION TO THE TOWN

13) Immediate Notification

- a) Where a Property Owner or their Contractor suspects that a blockage or obstruction may be located on the Municipal Portion of the sanitary Service Line, the Town must be notified immediately, including outside of regular business hours, by contacting the Town's after-hours or emergency contact number, and prior to any repair work being undertaken beyond initial emergency measures. Failure to notify the Town in a timely manner may result in the Town declining responsibility for the investigation, repair, or reimbursement of costs.

14) Time Limit for Notification and Reimbursement Requests

- a) Requests for cost consideration, or reimbursement related to a sanitary Service Line obstruction must be submitted to the Town no later than ten (10) business days from the date the obstruction was first identified or repair work was initiated. Requests received after this timeframe will not be considered.

15) The Town may, at its sole discretion, grant an extension for the provision of invoices for cost consideration, or reimbursement related to a sanitary Service Line beyond the ten (10) business day submission deadline in instances where the Property Owner has provided written notice within the allotted ten (10) business day timeframe of their intent to submit the required documentation as soon as reasonably possible

16) The Town reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to refuse or deny any request for cost consideration or reimbursement relating to a sanitary Service Line obstruction where the Property Owner fails to provide written notice within the prescribed ten (10) business day period or fails to submit all outstanding documentation within such time as the Town considers reasonable.

17) Once all required documentation has been received, the Town will review the submission within ten (10) business days to determine eligibility in accordance with this policy. The Property Owner will be notified in writing of the Town's decision.

18) Documentation and Receipts

- a) Property Owners seeking cost consideration or reimbursement must submit copies of all relevant invoices, receipts, and supporting documentation related to the investigation and repair of the sanitary Service Line obstruction.
- b) Documentation must clearly identify the location of the obstruction, the work completed, and the date repairs were undertaken. Failure to provide adequate documentation may result in the request being denied.

19) Cost Consideration and Reimbursement

- a) Submission of invoices, receipts, or supporting documentation does not guarantee reimbursement. All requests will be reviewed by the Town to determine eligibility based on the location of the obstruction, cause of the blockage, compliance with this policy, and applicable bylaws.
- b) Only costs deemed reasonable, necessary, and directly related to the eligible portion of the sanitary Service Line will be considered. The Town reserves the right to deny or partially reimburse submitted costs.

ONGOING MAINTENANCE

20) Property Owners are encouraged to proactively maintain their sanitary Service Lines to reduce the risk of obstructions.

21) Preventative maintenance may reduce the likelihood of unexpected repair costs.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

22) Town Staff must:

- a) Investigate reported obstructions in a timely manner
- b) Communicate findings clearly to Property Owners
- c) Coordinate repairs on the Municipal Portion of the Service Line
- d) Determine cost apportionment where shared responsibility applies

23) Property Owners must:

- a) Maintain the private portion of the sanitary Service Line in good working condition

- b) Arrange and pay for repairs on the Private Portion of the Service Line
- c) Cooperate with the Town during investigations and repairs