

# All About Sewer Inspections



## What Is a Sewer Scope?

A sewer scope is a video inspection of the lateral sewer line leading from the house at/near the foundation and connecting to the city or septic tank. A lateral sewer line is the privately-owned pipeline connecting the property to the publicly-owned main sewer line or septic tank.

Sewer-scoping the line can reveal blockages, damage to the pipe system, and other problems, which are vital for homeowners and home buyers to be aware of. For example, if there is a damp depression in the lawn above the sewer line, or if there is back-flow into the home, or if contaminants have been discovered in the potable water supply, a sewer scope inspection can be critical to identifying and confirming these problems, which must be addressed immediately.

Sewer lines are typically four to six inches in diameter, and sloped downwards to promote the flow of water away from your home and into your city's sewer.

Because these lines are not particularly large, they can easily develop buildup and clogs over time, depending on your home's water usage, and how much care used in disposing of items in the toilets and drain lines.

\*Sewer line clogs typically affect your toilets first, as these fixtures drain most directly into the sewer line.

## Types of Sewer Pipes



### **Clay**

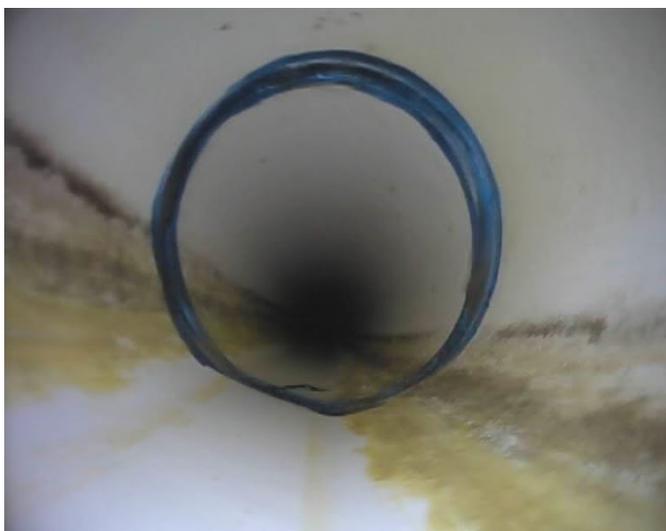
These pipes are often found in homes built before the 1950's.

Problems include: leaking, cracking, tree root infiltration and crumbling over time.

### **Cast Iron**

Used primarily in homes before the 1960's.

Problems include: corrosion and rust, clogs, cracking and holes.



### **PVC & ABS**

These pipes have been used in homes since the 1970's.

Problems include: Low areas (bellies) & misaligned connections.

\* Although less common, sewers can also be made of orangeburg, concrete & other materials.

## Cleaning Sewer Lines

The most basic and common approach is to use a drain auger, also called a drain snake. This is a long piece of flexible metal made to go down the drain and around any bends in the plumbing. Most professional plumbers have snakes that are 50 feet or longer to reach most clogs easily. If the clog is minor, it can be broken up using an auger in a matter of minutes. While it can get the drain flowing again, it is not actually cleaning the entire pipe. The heads are usually smaller than the pipe it's running through, so it only punches a hole through most clogs. **(\$100-\$250)**

Hydro Jetting is the process of using a high pressured flow of water to clean the inside surfaces of sewer & drain pipes, removing scale, roots, grease, and other debris that are built up inside the pipe. Hydro jetting is performed by inserting a high pressure hose inside of a clean out. The Hydro Jetter uses highly-pressurized water to wash away most debris found in the sewer pipes with a special nozzle located at the end of the high pressure hose.

The pressure of the water coming out from a hydro jetter can reach up to 4,000 psi which makes it an ideal method in removing even the most stubborn grease, dirt, debris, and tree roots. A Hydro Jetter can clean around 300 – 500 hundred feet of sewer or drain pipe.

**(\$300-\$600)**

## Typical Costs of Sewer Line Replacement

Average costs for full sewer line replacement vary greatly depending on the length and where the pipe runs. Costs can range from \$3000 - \$15000 or more. Sewer lines can be partially replaced if only a small section of the pipe is damaged, however full replacement is generally recommended. Any time a line runs underneath a patch of concrete the price increases dramatically.

