



Save our Sewers!

CITY OF ASHLAND PRIVATE PROPERTY I/I PROGRAM

Your sanitary sewer system is a valuable asset! The sanitary sewer system is used to convey wastewater from your home or business to the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) where it is treated and discharged safely back into the environment. Our sanitary sewer system needs maintenance and repair, just like any other utility, and clogged pipes are not the only concern.

Our sanitary sewer is NOT designed to convey storm water.

“Clear water” (from storm water, snow melt, and groundwater) that enters the sanitary sewer system is collectively referred to as **infiltration and inflow (I/I)**. In general, **infiltration** is clear water that enters through cracks, breaks, and other defects in the sanitary sewer system; **inflow** is clear water that enters through direct connections to the sanitary sewer system, such as sump pumps and storm sewer pipes.

WHY IS I/I A PROBLEM?

During rainfall events or significant snowmelt, the amount of I/I increases to a level that exceeds the sanitary sewer system capacity—the excess water has to go somewhere! The resulting mixture of sewage and clear water escapes as a **Sanitary Sewer Overflow (SSO)**. SSO's pose significant health and environmental risks as large amounts of untreated sewage is discharged to creeks, the ground surface, or directly to Lake Superior. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources prohibits SSO's.



Basement backups, another result of excessive I/I, create a significant health risk and can be very costly for homeowners to clean up. Without system-wide maintenance or repairs, more homes are affected every year by backup events.



In addition, **I/I costs all ratepayers a significant amount of money each year** due to increased pumping and treatment costs.



WHAT CAN BE DONE?

The City has taken significant steps to reduce I/I and better manage excess flows. The City will continue with the methodical reduction of I/I on the *publicly-owned* portions of the sewer system. However, focusing only on public side of the problem will not reduce I/I to acceptable levels.

I/I reduction in the *privately-owned* portions of the sewer system will be pivotal to the overall success of the I/I removal program. To facilitate the process of identifying and removing private property sources of I/I, the City initiated a Private Property I/I program in late 2013.

PRIVATE PROPERTY INSPECTIONS

As part of the City's efforts to identify and reduce sources of I/I originating from private property, private property inspections will be completed by City staff. During a one-hour appointment, City staff will be looking for connections to the sanitary sewer system such as sump pumps, area drains, foundation drains, and downspouts. Current plans include a multi-year inspection program, starting in the sewer districts with the greatest amount of I/I. Homeowners will be notified by mail when inspections are being completed in their district. Please refer to the letter for more information on how to schedule an appointment.

For additional information:

Ashland Department of Public Works
715-682-7061
or
<http://www.ci.ashland.wi.us/pii>

*When everyone helps,
we all benefit!*

THE CITY OF ASHLAND IS WORKING HARD TO SOLVE THE I/I PROBLEM!

The City has taken significant steps to help reduce I/I and better manage excess flows. A large project was completed in 2008 that helped to reroute flows, significantly reducing the frequency of SSO's along the lakeshore. In 2009, a City-wide study was completed to identify and prioritize the areas of the City contributing the largest amounts of I/I. In 2011, nearly 8 miles of sewer was televised, and 231 manholes were inspected in Sewer Districts 7 and 8, the two districts with the greatest amount of I/I. In 2013, nearly \$550,000 of grant money was used to rehabilitate and replace 3,830 linear feet of public sewer and 72 manholes in the two districts, significantly reducing I/I.

Although significant progress has been made towards reducing I/I, much more work remains. Plans are in place to continue with the methodical reduction of I/I on the publicly-owned portions of the sewer system, district by district. However, focusing only on public side of the problem will not reduce I/I to levels acceptable to the rate payers of Ashland.

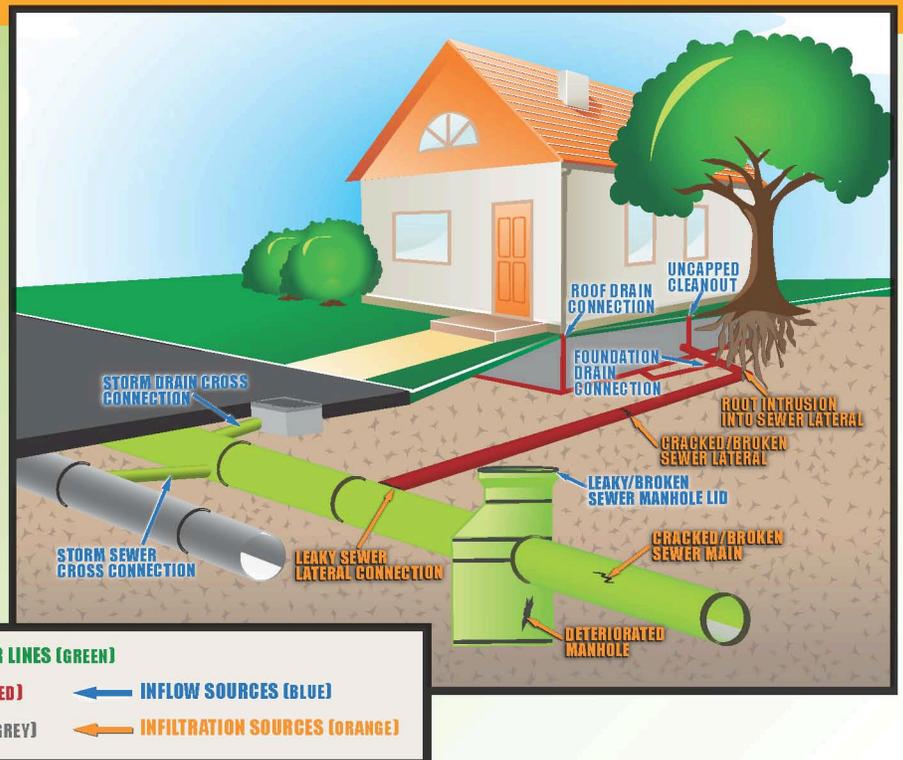
PRIVATE PROPERTY INSPECTION DETAILS

Private Property inspections, smoke testing, dye testing, and other investigative methods will be used to assist homeowners with identifying sources of I/I on their property. All investigative methods will be completed by City staff or their consultants, with no direct cost to the homeowner. If sources of I/I are identified on your property, the City will notify you and require repair or removal of the I/I source(s).

About one-third of the publicly-owned sanitary sewer pipes and manholes in Ashland are more than 50 years old, with much of it more than 100 years old! Although detailed records regarding the age of privately owned sewers are not kept, it is likely that the privately-owned sewer laterals are of similar age.

Who owns the Sewer System?

The sanitary sewer system is not all publicly owned. In fact, about 50% of the system is owned privately by homeowners and businesses. The portion of the sanitary sewer that conveys sewage from the building to the City-owned sewer mains is called the sewer lateral. In Ashland, the property owner owns the entire lateral from the sewer main to the building and is responsible for all associated maintenance.



The cumulative reduction of I/I sources on both public and private property should result in significant reductions in SSO's, basement backups, and other I/I related problems. This will provide peace of mind and help maintain reasonable wastewater service rates.