

Sewer maintenance matters

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Sewer systems are one of the most vital yet often overlooked important infrastructures. Beneath streets are complex networks of pipes that transport wastewater away from homes, businesses, and public spaces. The health and safety, and quality of life in a community depends on these systems functioning effectively. This is why the responsibility of maintaining them rests heavily on local government agencies and it is a responsibility that cannot be ignored.

Neglecting to maintain the sewer system can lead to the deterioration of pipes which can eventually collapse or burst. Such a failure can cause property damage and/or personal injury which in turn can lead to legal challenges and loss of public trust. WCIA recommends having a regular inspection and maintenance program to ensure your system is functioning properly. Regular maintenance should include but not be limited to:

- Inspection of all system components such as curbs and gutters, catch basins, culverts, grates, vegetated channels, underground pipes, and inlet and outlet equipment for retention/detention ponds
- Removal of all trash and debris
- Sediment control
- Stabilization of erosion
- Vegetation management to include mowing, planting beneficial vegetation, and removal of invasive growth (using mechanical methods of vegetation removal rather than applying herbicides)
- Hydro jetting and vactoring
- Documentation and retention of all inspection, maintenance, and restorative operations

Prioritizing sewer maintenance today means preventing crises and legal challenges tomorrow.

For more details on wastewater/sewer operations, please see [Liability Resource PWK.08](#). If you have any risk questions or need risk support or additional resources, please contact your assigned WCIA Risk Management Representative. We are always happy to help!