

Standard Operating Guideline - Sewer Backup and Response

Standard Operating Guideline (SOG)

Title: **SEWER BACKUP AND RESPONSE**

District Name: _____

Date Prepared: _____ Date Revised: _____

OBJECTIVE:

This Standard Operating Guideline (SOG) is intended to provide guidance for JPIA Members that operate and maintain wastewater and sewer collection systems. Each Member should establish by ordinance or resolution, the limits of their responsibility for the maintenance, inspection, and repair of mainlines, service laterals, and other related wastewater facilities.

RATIONALE / PURPOSE:

Sewer backups and line breaks will occur. It is the intention of the JPIA and its Members to handle claims effectively, minimize resultant damage, and control the cost of any claim. Effective risk management includes the clear assignment of responsibility, routine inspection, proper maintenance, and quick emergency response. The responsibility to inspect, maintain, and repair should be clearly defined by ordinance and resolution.

METHODS / PROCEDURES:

A property owner's sewer system or service lateral is connected to larger main lines. Service laterals are installed on private property and run to a point of connection on a larger main line in an easement or public street. The JPIA recommends that Members review their sewer use agreements. It should be the responsibility of the property owner to maintain, inspect, and repair the sewer lateral in accordance with the Member's ordinance.

Once a sewer spill is reported or discovered, the Member shall work to determine the cause and responsibility of the spill. When related to Member-owned facilities, crews should follow established procedures to:

- Protect property, streets, storm drain system, and public areas from damage.
- Contain, collect, and properly dispose of wastewater. Follow the Member's Sanitary Sewer Emergency Response Plan.
- Notify local and state agencies, as required.
- Complete an investigation and report possible claims to the JPIA in a timely manner.
- Document cleanup and corrective actions taken (see Sewer Backup Incident Form).

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When the cause of a sewer spill does not appear to be the responsibility of the Member:

- The Member shall inform the Property Owner/Tenant that the initial determination is that the cause is not related to Member-owned or maintained lines or facilities.
- Provide Property Owner/Tenant with a copy of the Member's Sewer Spill Reference Guide.
- Document all evidence that the cause is not due to a responsibility of the Member through the use of the Sewer Backup Incident Form. Include any photographs, diagrams, or supporting documentation.
- Keep copies of all documents and information for at least two years. Forward copies to the JPIA upon request.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS:

Sewer spills can cause health hazards, damage to property, and threaten the environment, local waterways, and beaches.

- Crews responsible for emergency response should be trained in proper PPE, procedures, and equipment to be used.
- Crews should be trained in the Member's Sanitary Sewer Emergency Response Plan.
- No cleanup or repair work should begin without consideration for containment, traffic control, PPE, etc.
- No open trenches and confined spaces shall be entered unless all pre-entry checklists and permits are reviewed by the supervisor on-site.

COST BENEFIT:

The proper assignment of responsibility, prompt response, professional handling of incidents, complete investigation and documentation of the incident; can significantly impact the outcome and cost of claims for the Member and the JPIA Pool.

INSPECTION FORMS / CHECKLISTS / DOCUMENTATION:

Sample Sanitary Sewer Overflow Response S.O.P.

Onsite Sewer Backup Incident Assessment

Sanitary Sewer Overflow Report – Public System

District Courtesy Notice - Private System Overflow Incident

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The SSO report collects detailed information on a specific overflow event. Districts are required to report all SSOs that result from a failure in any portion of a sanitary sewer system under their management. For the purposes of reporting, SSOs fall into one of two categories: Category 1 (greater threat to public health of water quality) and Category 2 (lesser threat to public health of water quality). A Category 1 SSO is defined as a failure in an enrollee's sanitary sewer system that results in, (1) discharge of sewage which equals or exceeds 1,000 gallons, or (2) discharge of sewage to a surface water and/or drainage channel, or (3) discharge of sewage to a storm drainpipe which was not fully captured and returned to the sanitary sewer system. A Category 2 SSO is defined as any discharge of sewage resulting from a failure in an enrollee's sanitary sewer system which does not meet the criteria for a Category 1 SSO.

SSO information reported by enrollees includes location of overflow, volume of sewage spilled, and cause of the overflow. A copy of the Category 1 and Category 2 SSO report form can be viewed at the links below:

- Category 1 SSO Report
www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/ssso/docs/detailcat1.pdf
- Category 2 SSO Report
www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/ssso/docs/detailcat2.pdf

If an enrollee does not have any SSOs in a calendar month, they are required to complete a No Spill Certification. The No Spill Certification form can be viewed at the link below:

- No Spill Certification
www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/ssso/docs/nospill.pdf
- Sewer Spill Reference Guide (Orange County)
http://www.ocwatersheds.com/publiceducation/pe_brochures_sewage_spill.asp