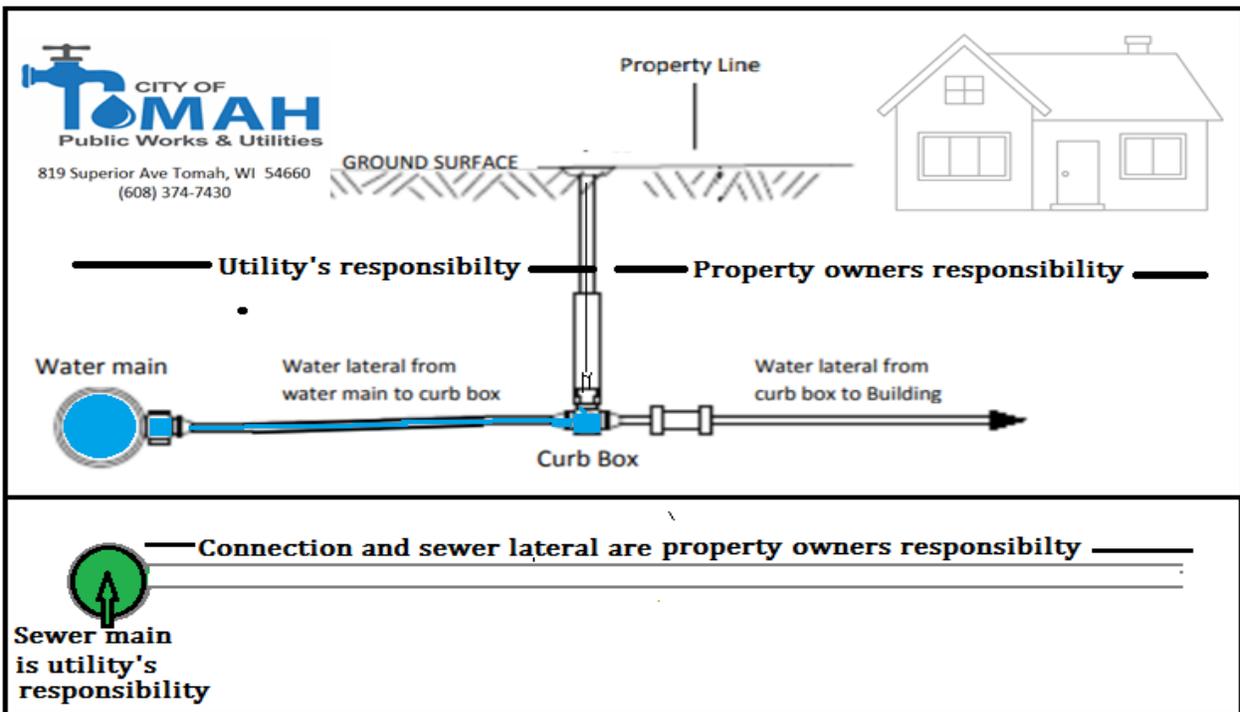


WATER & SEWER LATERAL FAQ'S

1. WHAT IS A WATER SERVICE LATERAL?

The water service lateral is the pipe that provides water from the water main in the street to a home or business. For residences this pipe is usually 1 inch in size and runs from the water main into the home where the water meter is installed. A typical water service lateral includes a tap at the main, a length of pipe to a location at or near the street right-of-way line, a curb stop and box, and another length of pipe into the building being served. A diagram showing a typical service lateral is shown below:



2. WHAT IS A SEWER LATERAL?

The sewer lateral is the privately owned service sewer pipe connecting the building and the sewers of the city. The property owner or customer owns and maintains the sanitary sewer service lateral all the way from the building to the City of Tomah's main within the street. Unlike water laterals where a clear demarcation of ownership can be achieved at the curb box located near the property line, no similar physical feature is typically present on a sewer lateral. Sewer laterals are also more prone to blockages (accumulation of grease, tree roots, other solid material or failure). Making the customer responsible for the entire lateral provides the customer with an incentive to care for the operation and use of the lateral. It also prevents questions regarding who is responsible for roots and other questions occurring at, or near the property line. According to Wisconsin Public Service Commission (PSC), the vast majority of the over 600 sewer systems in the state make the property owner or customer responsible for ownership as well as maintenance of the entire sewer lateral.

3. CAN I RUN MY SUMP PUMP LINE TO THE SEWER LATERAL?

No person shall make connection of roof downspouts, exterior foundation drains, areaway drains, basement sump pump or other sources of surface runoff or groundwater to a building sewer or building drain that in turn is connected directly or indirectly to a sanitary sewer. If such connections are found during an inspection by the director or his representative, correction shall be ordered. No person shall discharge or cause to be discharged any stormwater, surface water, groundwater, roof runoff, subsurface drainage, uncontaminated cooling water or any other unaltered water to any sanitary sewer.



4. WHAT IS A CURB STOP BOX?

The curb stop is a valve that allows the service to be turned on or off near the street right-of-way line. Since the curb stop itself and all of the lateral pipe is buried between 6 and 8 feet below the ground surface, the only evidence the curb stop is located below is the cover of the curb “box”. The curb box is a specially constructed metal tube that allows an operating wrench to be inserted into the curb box and onto the curb stop from above ground after removing the curb box cover.

5. WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE OWNERSHIP, MAINTENANCE, AND REPAIR OF A WATER SERVICE LATERAL?

The cost of the initial installation of a water service lateral is the responsibility of the customer. After the initial installation, the standard water industry practice is that the part of the water service lateral between the main and the curb stop is owned and maintained by the utility. The part of the service lateral from the curb stop to the building is owned and maintained by the customer. The curb stop serves as boundary between the two parts of the service lateral.

6. HOW DOES THE CURB STOP TELL US WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR A LEAK REPAIR?

Since the utility portion of the service lateral is always under pressure between the main and curb stop any leak on that part of the line cannot be controlled (turned off) without digging up the service lateral. If there is a question about a leaking service lateral, the curb stop would be turned off. If the leak does not stop, the repairs would be the responsibility of the utility. If the leak can be stopped, the repairs would be the responsibility of the customer.