

## ***Homeowner Sewer Maintenance***

**By the Town of Kamsack**

The sewage system is the responsibility of both the municipality and its residents. The town oversees public infrastructure, including water and sewer mains, while residents take responsibility for their connection to the main sewer line, the piping to their home and the piping inside their home. However, regular sewer line maintenance is one of the most forgotten homeowner chores.

Undertaking regular sewer upkeep can help prevent health risks, clogs, backflows, water damage and costly repairs; not to mention wasted time and avoidable frustrations. To ensure the proper use and operation of your sewer line, the Town of Kamsack strongly encourages every resident to take the following steps throughout the year:

### **Daily**

On a daily basis, make sure that only flushable items are going down your drain.

Water, human waste and toilet paper are the only items you can flush down your drain. Other objects, such as garbage, wipes, rags, cigarette butts, disposable diapers and grease, cannot be flushed down the drain. These items can clog your home's sewer line as well as public lines and pollute the Assiniboine River.

Even items advertised as flushable may pose problems. To verify if an item is flushable, leave it in a bucket of water for an hour. If it does not disintegrate, it cannot be flushed.

### **Weekly**

On a weekly basis, watch each sink and bathtub in your home drain. This observation can be made after using a sink or bathtub, or by pouring a gallon of water down the drain. If your sink or tub is draining poorly, you may have a clog or blockage. The blockage may be corrected by residential plumbing products or

by a licensed and professionally trained plumber.

### **Monthly**

On a monthly basis, check your water pipes by looking under each sink as well as at any exposed piping in a basement, crawl space or other part of your home. If you see leaks, breaks or rust, contact a licensed and professionally trained plumber.

### **Yearly**

On a yearly basis, schedule an inspection of your sewer line with a licensed and professionally trained plumber. Plumbers use a specialized camera to inspect the overall condition of the piping as well as remove leaves, paper towels, tree roots and other debris from the line. Once the line has been serviced, consider requesting a camera inspection to ensure that all of the debris has been successfully removed. And, if any further issues are discovered during an inspection, the licensed and professionally trained plumber can offer solutions and possible repairs.

Residents should also carefully review their homeowner or tenant insurance to ensure that the sewer line, including any possible damages, is adequately covered.

### **Tree Roots**

One of the most common issues with residential sewer lines continues to be tree root blockages. While tree roots can cause frustration, trees provide a number of significant benefits to every community, from the environment to the economy.

In addition to the beneficial presence of trees, the Town of Kamsack also introduced several programs to help offset the costs created by tree root blockages.

These programs include:

- **Annual Reimbursement for Tree Roots**

If a town-owned tree is near a residential sewer line, Kamsack will reimburse the resident \$50, per year, to reduce the cost of cleaning the sewer line. The reimbursement is approved after the municipality receives a receipt, from a licensed company, clearly stating that tree roots were removed from the sewer line and that the original invoice has already been paid.

- **RootX**

After receiving the Annual Reimbursement, a resident is also eligible for RootX at no extra charge. This chemical kills any remaining roots in a sewer line. RootX should be applied 6 weeks after the roots are cut and removed as new growth will occur unless this chemical treatment is applied.

- **Shared Cost Epoxy Lining**

A 2020 pilot project where a resident's sewer line, running from the home to the main sewer, is lined with an epoxy coating. This coating prevents tree roots from penetrating sewer lines. The cost is approximately \$100 per foot and is cost-shared equally between the resident and the Town of Kamsack. This program may be offered again 2021, depending on budgetary considerations.

Performing routine maintenance greatly reduces the risks of a sewer line malfunction. Regular maintenance also helps protect the value of your property, today and well into the future.

The next time you use your drains, remember that you play a direct role in maintaining the operations and quality of the sewage system; for yourself as well as the community.