CITY OF HUTCHINSON

HANDBOOK

for

WATER, WASTEWATER, AND STORM WATER UTILITIES

January 2020

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GENERAL POLICIES

CITY OF HUTCHINSON

WATER, WASTEWATER & STORM WATER UTILITIES

The City Council governs the Water, Wastewater and Storm Water utilities. The City Council regularly meets on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month at 5:30 p.m. at City Center, 111 Hassan St SE. These policies are reviewed and approved by the City Council. The City Council reserves the right to make changes to these policies, without notice, as it deems necessary from time to time. The City Council also reserves the right to vary from its policies in any circumstance they deem such variation is required or is beneficial.

BUSINESS OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Friday	8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

BUSINESS OFFICE INFORMATION:

Mailing address for business office:	City of Hutchinson 111 Hassan St SE Hutchinson, MN 55350
Customer Service phone number:	(320) 234-5672
Project/Environmental/Regulatory Manager:	(320) 234-5682
Internet address:	www.ci.hutchinson.mn.us

EMERGENCY SERVICE

Emergency service telephone number:	(320) 587-2242*

* *Police Department, non-emergency line. Dispatchers have access to after-hours utility staff.*

This handbook was compiled to provide comprehensive information about City utility services.

While every attempt has been made to provide accurate information in this handbook regarding City Code, policies and requirements in effect on the date of this handbook, the City reserves the right to change and make exceptions to this handbook, its ordinances and policies at any time and to adopt new and amended ordinances and policies when, in its sole discretion, the City deems them necessary. The most recent ordinances or policies adopted by the City Council shall be in effect, regardless of information contained in this handbook.

Customers with specific issues relating to utility services provided by the City are encouraged to contact Customer Service.

Interruptions in Utility service

Please notify Customer Service if there is an interruption in service. During regular business hours, please call Customer Service at (320) 234-5672. After regular business hours, please call the Police Department at their non-emergency telephone number, (320) 587-2242.

It is the City's intent to provide utility services described in this document. Occasionally, there may be interruptions to service. Customers are responsible for planning for service interruptions and providing protection for themselves and their property resulting from service interruptions.

It is the City's intent to mitigate any interruptions and to restore service in a timely manner. Many factors may affect restoration of utility services including, but not limited to; infrastructure failure, adverse weather conditions, available staff, equipment, or other necessary services provided by City staff or contractors.

Utility Ownership

The City retains ownership of all utility mains and related appurtenances, except as provided for by City Code.

It is unlawful for anyone to:

a) Willfully or carelessly break, injure, mar, deface, disturb, block or in any way interfere with any infrastructure, fixture or appurtenance related to the provision of utility service.

b) Make any connection with or opening into, use or alter in any way any municipal utility system without having first applied for and received written permission to do so.

c) Turn on or connect to a utility when the same has been turned off or disconnected for reason of non-payment, without having first obtained permission to do so.

d) Circumvent any meter, knowingly use unmetered services, or knowingly use any municipal utility service of which the City has no knowledge and for which appropriate rates are not paid.

The City is not liable for any deficiency or failure affecting water, wastewater and storm water utilities. For example, in case of a fire, water may be diverted from private services to ensure adequate water for firefighting. Utility services may also be unavailable during installation or repair of infrastructure.

Installation of Services

Unless otherwise noted, the installation of utility services between the property served and the city-owned mains, including restoration of any disturbed areas, is the customer's responsibility.

Application for and Provision of Service

Contact Customer Service to apply for utility services. Provision of utility services is made only under current rate structures and applicable ordinances, policies and requirements.

Applications must include the legal description of the premises, address of the premises, owner's/customer's name and address, name and address of any contractor, date of installation, general description of the type and method of construction, and other information pertinent to the utility service that may be requested by the City.

Connections to municipal water, wastewater and storm water systems are allowed only after the City has certified that connection fees and construction costs for the system have been accounted for. Applicable connection fees must be paid prior to connecting to the utility.

Except upon receipt of written permission from the City otherwise, the property owner is considered the customer. Utility service charges are the property owner's responsibility and are billed in the name of the customer.

Installations of new services and final meter readings taken prior to transferring an account from one entity to another are conducted only during normal business hours.

Discontinuation of Service

Utility services may be disconnected, without notice, in the event of non-payment of charges, unauthorized use of, or tampering with, utility infrastructure and appurtenances. The City reserves the right to charge the customer for the cost of any necessary repairs and pursue other legal action provided for in City ordinances. Utility services may also be disconnected if meters become inaccessible.

Failure to pay for utility services rendered, or to respond to a disconnect notice issued by the City, may result in disconnection of services without additional notice to the customer. Neither the City, nor any of its agents, employees or representatives shall be responsible for damages or claims incurred as a result of disconnecting utility services.

Utility services are discontinued whenever:

a) Application is made by the current customer to terminate provision of utility services.
b) When existing regulations regarding the utility service are violated.
c) When charges for service remain unpaid after notice has been provided
d) When it is found that customers provided misrepresentative or fraudulent information in connection with their application or use of utility services.
e) When utility service infrastructure or appurtenances are tampered with or used without permission.

Discontinuation of Service (October 15 to April 15). Utility services shall not be terminated between October 15 and April 15 if all of the following criteria apply:

a) Discontinuation of utility service would affect the primary heat source for the dwelling.
b) The customer has declared the inability to pay for service on forms required by the City.
c) The household income of the customer is less than 185% of the federal poverty level.
d) Utility services provided prior to October 15 are fully paid or the customer is current with a previously authorized payment plan.

Unpaid balances for utility services are a lien upon the premises served. The City retains the authority to certify unpaid balances for utility services to the County Auditor for collection along with property taxes.

The City will perform or inspect all disconnections of abandoned service installations. Abandoned services shall be disconnected and, whenever feasible, all appurtenances removed from the main to the property served. Disconnections and restoration of disturbed areas are completed at the customer's expense. When a service is being abandoned and upsized, customers shall apply for utility service as if they were installing a new service.

Right of Entry

By applying for and receiving municipal utility services, customers irrevocably consent and agree that any municipal employee acting within the scope of his or her employment may enter into and upon the private property of the customer, including dwellings and other buildings, at all reasonable times under the circumstances, to inspect, repair, read meters, connect or disconnect services, or otherwise ensure provision of utility services in accordance with existing regulations.

Entry into property, except in cases of emergency as determined by the City, shall be made after notifying the customer. If the customer refuses entry under non-emergency conditions, the City must obtain an administrative search warrant to enter into the property. In any case, refusal by the customer to allow entry may result in discontinuation of utility services.

Rates & Charges

Rates and charges for water, wastewater and storm water services are determined and amended by the City Council. Each year, rates and charges are adopted by Ordinance. The most recent utility rate fee structure is available on the City's website at:

http://www.ci.hutchinson.mn.us/departmentsfacilities/finance/water-wastewater-garbage-storm-water-billing/

Payment of Utility Bills

IT IS THE CUSTOMER'S RESPONSIBILITY TO PAY BILLS ON TIME AND IN FULL.

IT IS THE CUSTOMER'S RESPONSIBILTY TO KEEP THE CITY ADVISED OF ANY ADDRESS CHANGES OR CHANGES IN OWNERSHIP STATUS.

Payments are due by the date shown on the statement. Payments may be made by cash, check, money order, credit card or automatic bank payment plan. Checks and money orders must be for the exact amounts. No change will be given for checks, money orders or credit card transactions. No second party or post-dated check will be accepted. Checks will be deposited as soon as practicable after they are received.

Charges for utility services, non-sufficient funds, and other charges and fees relating to the account must be paid in order to keep the account current. Payments are applied first to outstanding balances for services, then to fees and other charges due, and then to utility services.

During business office hours, customers may present payments to Customer Service, located at City Center, 111 Hassan St SE, Hutchinson, MN 55350. Payments may also be made at one of the drop boxes provided at Cashwise Foods or at the Hutchinson City Center.

If you have trouble paying your utility bill, local agencies may be able to provide payment assistance. The State Department of Human Services recommends that you call the county in which you live.

If you are unable to pay your utility bills in full and on time, please contact Customer Service at (320) 234-5672 as soon as possible, so a satisfactory payment schedule can be discussed.

Utility Bills

Utility bills include: account number, present and previous meter readings, dates the meters were read, amount of utility service used, number of days between meter readings, amount charged for each utility service item, taxes and

other required fees, utility account adjustments, any miscellaneous adjustments and/or charges, the date payment is due, and the total amount due to the City.

Meters are read automatically via radio signals about every 30 days. Estimated meter readings, based on account history, may be used if access to the meter is not possible or if the meter has stopped working.

Explanation of the Billing Procedure

Bills for utility services are sent to the address provided in the application approximately 3 to 5 days after meters have been read.

Customers have approximately 10 days to pay the bill in full, before or on the due date printed on the bill. Bills paid after the due dates may be subject to the following additional charges:

- Late payment charge on any unpaid balance
- A processing fee for electronic payments
- A processing fee for payments received after the due date
- A charge will be assessed if a check is returned for non-sufficient funds
- Other charges, including but not limited to:
    a. Trip charges to notify a customer to make payment.
    b. Trip charges to disconnect utilities.
    c. Trip charges to reconnect utilities after payment has been received.

Notices of pending disconnection for non-payment are highlighted at the bottom of the billing statement and are also made by separate notice. The notice will specify a timeframe to pay the bill or to make other satisfactory arrangements. If full payment or other arrangements have not been made by the deadline, City personnel may be dispatched to the property to disconnect utility services (see also disconnection of services section).

Automatic Bill Payment Plan

Customers may apply to make utility service payments directly from their account. Customers must fill out an Authorization for Automatic Payment form supplied by Customer Service. Once approved, payments are withdrawn on the date the bill is due. Customers will receive monthly utility statements indicating the payment amount and date that funds will be withdrawn. Contact Customer Service before the amount is withdrawn if there is disagreement with the billing or if there are any questions. Customers will have approximately 10 days to review bills before the money is withdrawn.

In the case of two consecutive billing periods with non-sufficient funds, accounts will be removed from the automatic payment plan. Charges for non-sufficient funds shall apply.

Errors in Billing

Overcharged customers are credited on the next statement or are refunded on their final billing. Adjustments resulting in a credit greater than an average of three (3) months billing will be refunded by check.

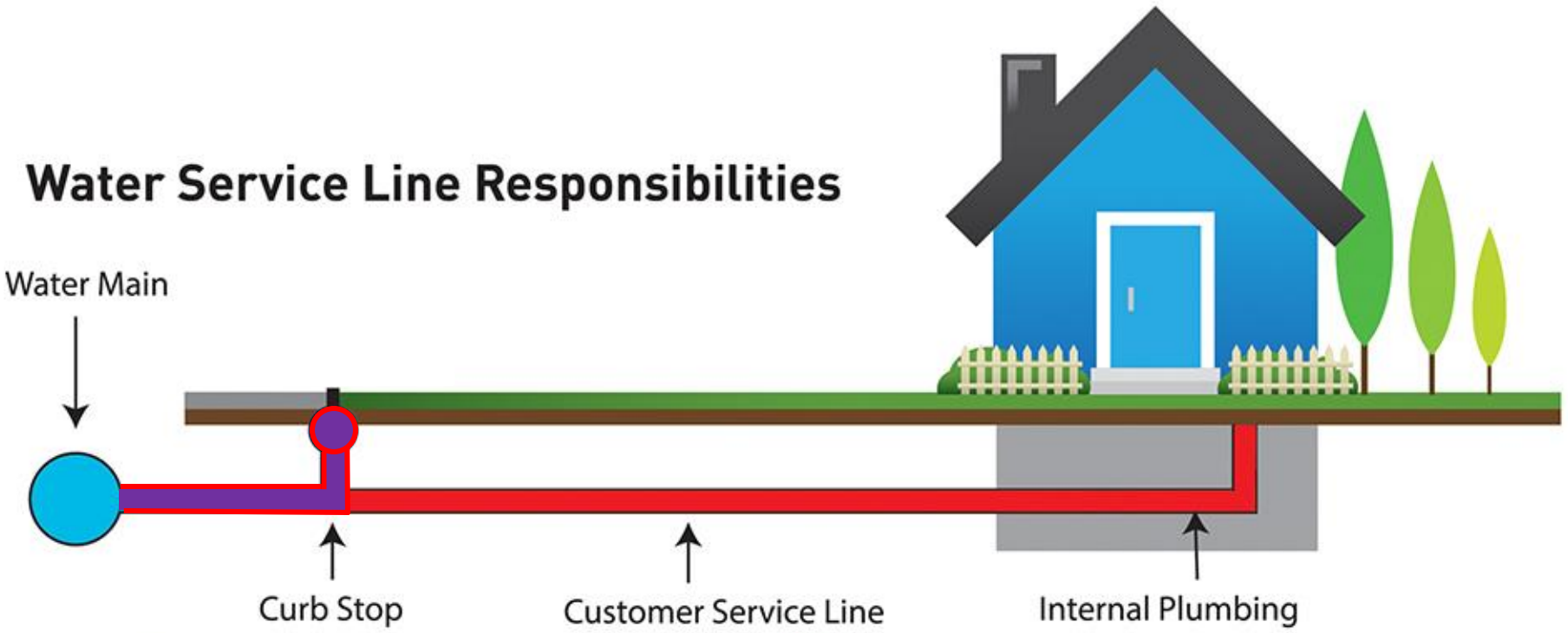
The customer will not receive a refund of overcharges for any errors more than two (2) years previous to the date of notice.

Undercharged customers will be billed using a separate invoice. The invoice will include an explanation of charges.

Rental Property

Owners of rental property shall sign a Landlord Agreement form acknowledging they will be responsible for all utility charges after shut off dates requested by a renter. Failure of the owner to execute this form may lead to a disconnection of services as stated above.

Water Service Line Responsibilities



City is responsible for the water main.

Customers are responsible for service line from water main to internal plumbing.

If a service leak can be stopped by closing the curb stop, the customer must repair any leak in the service line at their expense. The valve at the curb stop will not be turned on until repairs to the service line are certified by the City.

If a service leak cannot be stopped by closing the curb stop, the City will initiate repair of the service. The City provides this service at its discretion, beyond requirements in the City Code, and may impose a reasonable fee for such service. Costs of $0-$4,000 will be covered 100% by the City. Costs over $4,000 will be the customer's responsibility.

In any case, the City reserves the right to initiate repairs at the customer's expense if the service leak is causing potential property damage or presents a life-health-safety hazard

WATER

Water service interruptions

Water supplies may be interrupted at any time for purposes of firefighting and/or repairing or installing water system infrastructure.

Water service installations

Water service installations are made at the customer's expense. All water service installations shall conform to Minnesota's Plumbing Code. Failure to comply with required inspections shall be grounds for not supplying or disconnecting water service to the property.

Service pipes are to be laid in a manner to prevent rupture by settlement and to prevent freezing. Trees should not be placed within six feet (6') of private services.

Minimum size connection to the water main shall be one inch. A stand pipe valve or curb stop is required for all installations. Kits are available from the City to protect curb stops or stand pipe valves that end up being located within driveways. Joints for copper tubing must be flared or compression-fitted and be kept to a minimum. All joints must be left exposed until inspected by the City. Customers with self-contained fire protection systems may apply to connect directly to water mains for use in case of fire.

Water service pipes connected to the City's water system shall not be cross-connected to any private water system (well, tank, pipe or other device with any other water source). If a cross-connection to a private system is found, the City will notify the customer. If the required repair is not made immediately, water service will be shut off. Service will not be restored until the City determines there are no cross-connections with private water systems.

The City will provide all water meters, remote meter reading devices and connectors in accordance with information included on the plumbing permit application.

Water may be turned on to the property at any time during construction. No water used prior to installation of the water meter may be used to irrigate vegetation. The service will be shut off if unmetered construction water is used to irrigate vegetation.

To ensure proper fit during construction, plumbers may request a "dummy" meter (3/4" or 1"). At the City's option, the actual 3/4" or 1" meter may be supplied. For meters larger than 1", the actual meter will be supplied.

Water service installations (cont.)

Straight piping or equivalent shall be installed at a length of at least three (3) times the pipe diameter before the meter, and a minimum of four (4) times the pipe diameter immediately after the meter. For example, a 2 inch (2") line would require a minimum of 6 inches (6") of straight piping before the meter and 8 inches (8") of straight piping or equivalent after the meter.

Meters shall remain easily accessible and be placed as close to 12 inches (12") above the finished floor elevation as is feasible. Meters may not be installed within walls or be otherwise boxed in during construction. Meters shall be located as close as possible to where the service line enters the building.

Water Consumption

Customers shall purchase and install water meters and remote reading devices approved by the City. Meter installation, including any remote meter reading devices, shall be controlled by the City. Repairs and/or replacements of water meters, other than those resulting from normal usage, shall be the customer's responsibility. Repairs and replacements of water meters necessitated by normal use shall be the City's responsibility. Repairs and replacements of remote reading devices necessitated by normal use shall be done at the City's expense.

If a customer requests a meter to be tested for accuracy, the request shall be accompanied by a deposit for each meter tested. If the meter is found to be inaccurate, the meter will be replaced and the deposit returned to the customer. If the meter is found to be accurate, the City will retain the deposit to defray the cost of testing the meter.

In cases when a shortage of water threatens the City, the City may prohibit water use or limit the times and hours during which water may be used for lawn and garden sprinkling, irrigation, car washing, air conditioning and other uses. It is unlawful to use water in a manner so restricted after an official public announcement of restrictions.

It is unlawful for any person, other than Fire Department or Public Works personnel, to open any fire hydrant or provide tools necessary for opening fire hydrants.

The City may provide unmetered water for construction or other purposes. The service shall be provided at applicable rates established by the City.

Water service maintenance

It is the customer's responsibility to maintain the water service pipe from the main into the building. The customer's responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the stand pipe or curb stop and all equipment associated with the service line, stand pipe or curb stop. Frozen service pipes between the main and the building are the customer's responsibility.

The City may, at its discretion, make minor repairs related to water service standpipes, such as installing standpipe extensions, couplers and repair tops. In cases where it is not feasible for the City to perform minor repairs, due to the location and/or complexity of the repair, the customer will be responsible for these repairs.

Customers may be notified of a service leak by the City. Notice will be given first by attempting verbal notification, then by information delivered to the property, and finally by letter.

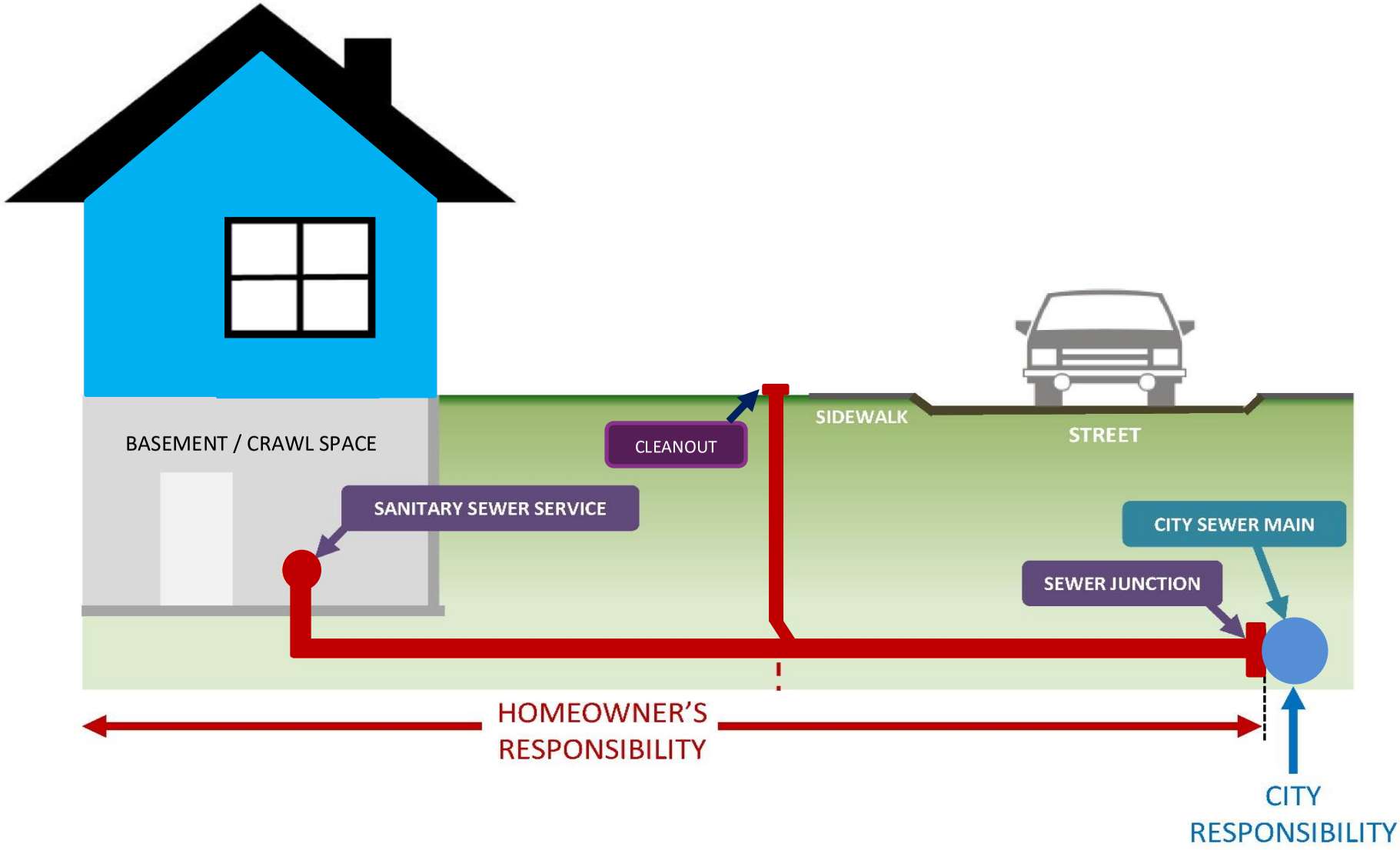
The City will attempt to stop the leak by closing the service stand pipe valve or curb stop.

- If the service line is directly connected to a City water main and the leak can be stopped by closing the valve at the service stand pipe or curb stop, the customer must repair any leak in the service line at their expense. The service stand pipe valve or curb stop will not be turned on until repairs are certified by the City, notwithstanding that water may be provided for minimal domestic uses in cases where no significant damage will be caused by such provision.

- If the service leak cannot be stopped by closing the service stand pipe valve or curb stop, the City will initiate repair of the service. The City provides this service at its discretion, beyond requirements of the City Code, and imposes a reasonable fee for such service. The first $4,000 for repair of the service leak of a service line directly connected to a City water main and restoration of disturbed areas will be covered by the City. Costs over $4,000 will be the customer's responsibility.

In any case, the City can initiate repairs at the customer's expense if the service leak is causing potential property damage or presents a life-health-safety hazard.

Wastewater Service Line Responsibilities



WASTEWATER

Wastewater services

Installation of a wastewater service requires a permit from the City. The cost of installing a wastewater service is the customer's responsibility. Connections to the wastewater system shall be inspected by the City. Connections to the City wastewater system are allowed only if there is available treatment capacity in wastewater treatment facilities.

Property owners with septic systems, holding tanks, mound systems or other on-site wastewater systems are required to connect to the City wastewater system whenever such system is available to the property, unless granted a variance by the City.

Construction and connection of wastewater services shall conform to Minnesota's Building Code, the City Code, and/or other applicable regulations. All connections must be gas-tight and water-tight.

Whenever possible, services shall be brought to buildings at an elevation below the basement floor. Installation and maintenance of any necessary on-site lift or grinder systems are the customer's responsibility. Any grease, oil and grit interceptors that may be required are the customer's responsibility to install and maintain.

If a customer has a significant amount of metered water that does not reach the wastewater collection system, the customer may request installation of a deduct meter at their own cost.

Industrial Wastewater

For specific information, please contact the Project/Environmental/Regulatory Manager at (320) 234-5682.

The City Code outlines industrial wastes, including a variety of liquids, solids and gases, which are unlawful to discharge into the wastewater collection system. There are also limits on the chemical and/or biological composition of discharges into the wastewater system.

In cases where the customer discharges water that contains these substances or is otherwise out of compliance with minimum standards for wastewater discharge, a special industrial user permit and agreement with the City may be required. Significant industrial users are determined by their potential to adversely impact the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Expanding wastewater volumes and making changes to existing wastewater characteristics may also require permit coverage for industrial discharges.

Industrial Wastewater (cont.)

Dilution of industrial wastes is not a substitute for adequate pretreatment or other provisions that may be outlined in an agreement with the City. Those discharging industrial wastes may be required to report pertinent data regarding the quantity and characteristics of wastes discharged. Wastes found to have the potential for life or health hazards or are potentially damaging to wastewater treatment infrastructure may be rejected, require pretreatment, require discharge rate controls, and/or require payment for additional treatment requirements beyond existing wastewater service rates. Those discharging industrial wastes may be required to construct control manholes to facilitate measurement, observation and sampling of wastes. Flow measurement devices may also be required, if metered water use is not adequate for determining waste volumes.

Sources of wastewater may require sampling at the City's discretion, the cost of such sampling being the property owner's responsibility unless otherwise identified within a pre-treatment agreement.

Wastewater system installation

Wastewater service installations are made at the customer's expense. All wastewater service installations shall conform to Minnesota's Plumbing Code. Failure to comply with required inspections shall be grounds for disconnecting water service to the property.

Service pipes are to be laid in a manner to prevent rupture by settlement and to prevent freezing. Minimum size connection to the sanitary sewer main shall be four inch (4"). A marked cleanout pipe at the property line is required for all new installations. A metal post or metal cover of sufficient size shall be installed immediately adjacent to or on the sewer cleanout to facilitate locating the cleanout, should it become covered. Kits are available from the City to protect cleanout pipes that end up being located within driveways. Trees should not be placed within six feet (6') of private services.

Wastewater service pipes that are connected to the City's system shall not be connected to any private system (septic tank, cistern or other device). If a connection to a private system is found, the City will notify the customer. If the required repair is not made immediately, City water service will be shut off. Service will not be restored until the City determines there are no connections with private wastewater systems.

Wastewater system maintenance

Maintenance of and repairs to wastewater service lines, from the main into the building, are the customer's responsibility.

Existing wastewater service lines may be used in connection with new or altered buildings located on a property already connected to the sewer utility, provided they meet all requirements of the Building and Plumbing Codes and related City ordinances and policies.

Maintenance of necessary on-site wastewater lift or grinder systems shall be at the customer's expense.

Unpolluted water sources, such as storm water, ground water, roof runoff, subsurface drainage, or cooling water shall not be connected to the wastewater system.

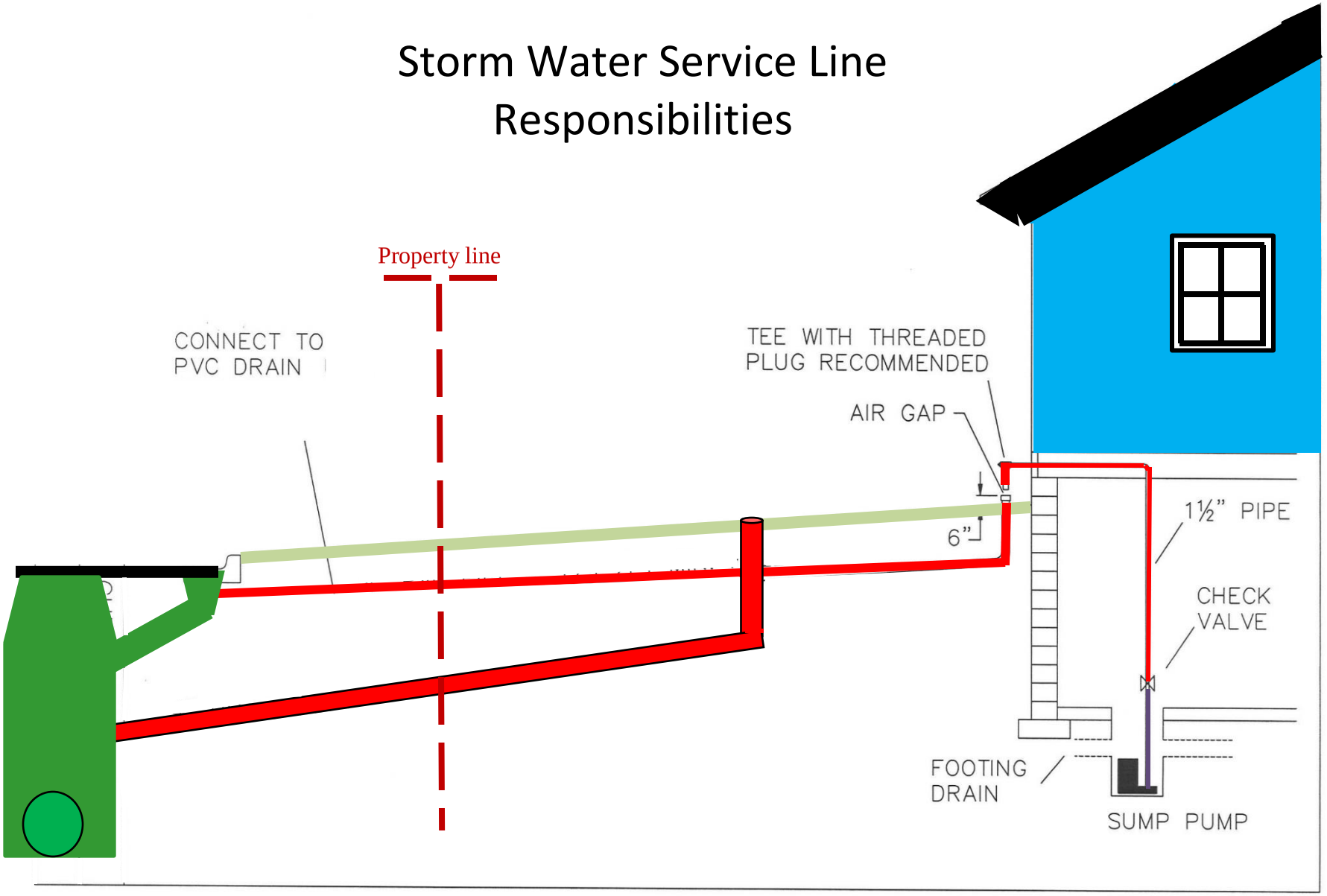
Wastewater backups

Occasionally, blockages or flooding in a wastewater service line may result in backup of wastewater into a structure. Property owners are encouraged to contact Customer Service, or if after normal business hours the Police Department non-emergency telephone number, to notify the City of a backup. The City will inspect upstream and downstream facilities to determine whether the blockage is in the private service line or the main. If the blockage is in the main, City staff will attempt to clear the blockage. In cases where City mains are flowing normally, the customer shall be responsible for clearing blockages in their service line.

In cases where a blockage in the main cannot be removed in a timely manner, City staff may attempt to install a bypass until the wastewater main or service line is repaired. If a bypass is not feasible or if the bypass would not or does not function properly, the City may recommend evacuation of the property until repairs are made.

Customers who have experienced a wastewater backup are encouraged to work safely while cleaning up property affected by backups. Customers should disconnect potentially dangerous utilities, document damage, check with their homeowner's insurance company, and if they feel it is warranted, submit a claim to the City Finance Department.

Storm Water Service Line Responsibilities



STORM WATER

Storm Water service

Storm water and all unpolluted water shall be discharged to the storm sewer system or to a natural outlet approved by the City. Water from roof drains, surface drains, sump pumps, footing tiles or other natural precipitation cannot be discharged into the sanitary sewer system.

Information regarding sump pump installation, use and maintenance is available by contacting Customer Service. Permanent sump pump installations must provide for year-round discharge capability outside of the structure or be directly connected to the storm water system using an approved, permitted connection.

Permanent sump pump installations must include a rigid discharge line, a check valve and an air gap. There can be no valves or quick connections to alter the path of the flow into a sanitary sewer system. In some cases, it may be possible to connect sump pumps into the storm water system. Sump pump installations must provide for at least two water outlets. Whenever direct connections are feasible, property owners must obtain a permit to access the storm sewer. Permits are obtained by contacting Customer Service.

Unpolluted cooling water may be discharged into the storm water system or approved natural outlet once a permit is received from the City and from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

Trees should not be planted within six feet (6') of private services.

Some industrial, commercial and institutional customers may qualify for credits to their storm water utility charges in cases where there is on-site storm water treatment for quantity and quality. Treatment for quantity and quality generally requires construction and maintenance of ponds or the installation of other approved storm water management devices at the customer's expense.

Further information about storm water credits is available by contacting the Project/Environmental/ Regulatory Manager at (320) 234-5682.

Storm Water system maintenance

The customer is responsible for maintaining and repairing storm water service lines from their structure to the point where they enter the City system. The City is responsible to maintain and repair storm sewer mains and appurtenances located on publicly owned properties, publicly controlled easements, and on rights-of-way.