



Water or Sewer Service Line Failure

Resident Responsibilities

This document outlines your responsibilities for water or sewer service line repairs on your property. It applies whether City of Helena staff identify the need for repair, or if you hire a plumber who discovers a failing line. In the latter case, be sure to notify the City as well.

Who is Responsible?

Property owners are responsible for the portion of the water and sewer service lines running from the main line (under the street) to the house, including all interior pipes and valves as well as repair of the impacted street per City Code 6-2-3 Rule 7 (Water) and 6-3-6 Rule 7 (Wastewater). Property owners are also responsible for repair of the curb, gutter, and sidewalk per City Code 7-4-8.

Taking Action:

1. Contact a Licensed Plumber or Excavator: Choose contractors licensed in Helena with experience replacing service lines.

2. Ask them:

- **Experience:** Do they have expertise in replacing water and sewer service lines in Helena?
- **Permits:** Will the plumber apply for the plumbing permits? Will the excavator apply for the street opening permits?
- **References:** Consider requesting references before hiring.

Repair or Replacement:

- Most service line failures require a **total replacement** to ensure a comprehensive and long-term fix.
- Lead or galvanized steel lines must be replaced.

Notify City Staff:

- When your plumber and/or excavator contractor contacts City staff for permits, **advise them to clearly explain that it is an “emergency service line repair” to expedite the permitting process.**
- If your line is found to be lead or galvanized steel, please inform the City Utility Maintenance Main Line staff at 406-457-8567.

Financing the Repair:

- Homeowners are responsible for the repair costs.
- Some homeowner's insurance policies cover service line replacement costs. Contact your insurance company to find out if you are covered.
- Pay out-of-pocket or consider the City's Zero Interest Service Line Replacement Loan Program: www.helenamt.gov/Departments/Public-Works/Utility-Maintenance/Service-Line-Replacement-Loan

Additional Resources:

- Utility Maintenance Division: 406-447-8567 or www.helenamt.gov/Departments/Public-Works/Utility-Maintenance.
- For street opening permits, contact the City Engineering Division at 406-447-8429.
- For plumbing permits, contact the City Building Division at 406-447-8438.

It is important you act promptly to address the issue and minimize disruptions.