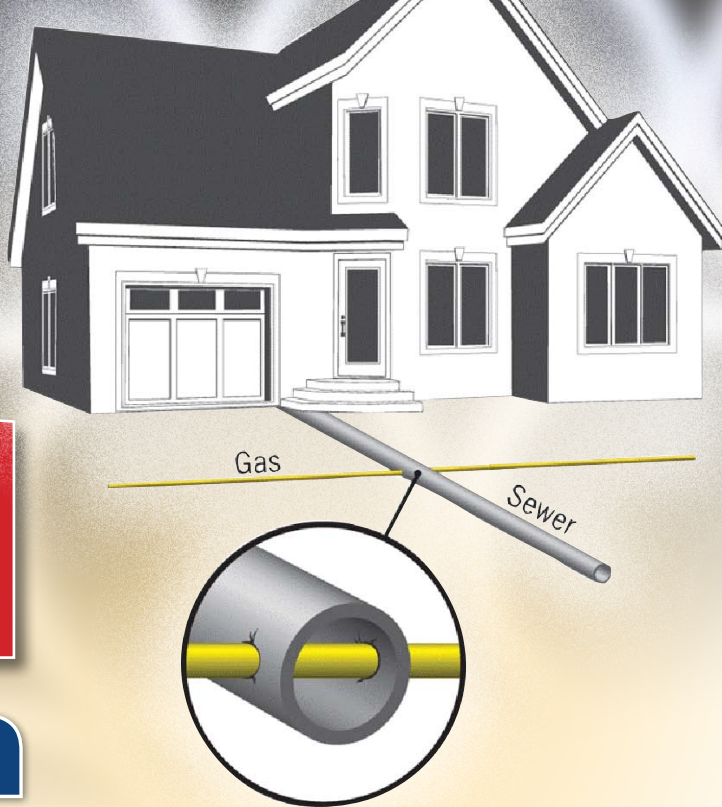


Important safety information you need to know before

clearing a blocked sewer line



Many plumbing problems can be fixed within the walls of a home or business. However, there are times when you have to go beyond the outside walls of a building to clear a blocked sewer line. It's important for you to know that there may be a potential safety issue that could arise if you attempt to clear a blocked sewer service line beyond the outside walls of a building. It is possible that natural gas lines installed using trenchless practices may have inadvertently penetrated sewer service lines and remain undetected.

Without interference, the natural gas service line is safe. Unless the natural gas line is damaged, cross-bore utility lines are not dangerous on their own and do not pose an immediate safety risk. Homeowners can have a natural gas line intersecting a sewer service line without being aware of it and without it being a problem. However, **if rotating or water-jetting equipment makes contact with the gas line that intersects the sewer, it could damage the gas line and cause a gas leak, fire, or explosion.**

What you need to know before clearing a blocked sewer line

When a sewer line becomes clogged or backs up, you need to get into that sewer line to clear it. However, there are a few things you should know before you attempt to clear a blocked service line. Rotating equipment—such as motorized augers, power snakes, or other root-cutting equipment—is commonly used to remove the obstruction. In some cases, water-jetting equipment may be required. If this type of equipment

is used, it could make contact with and damage a natural gas line that intersects the sewer line, and that could result in a gas leak, fire, or explosion. Although we aren't aware of any serious incidents in Canada, there have been incidents in the United States.

Call before clearing a blocked sewer line

Call Ontario One Call and ask for a free Natural Gas Sewer Safety Inspection before you clear a blocked sewer service line beyond the outside walls of a house or building. **You can reach Ontario One Call 24 hours a day, seven days a week at 1-800-400-2255.**

Once a Sewer Safety Inspection has been requested, the following steps will be taken:

1. Ontario One Call will dispatch a gas company representative on an emergency basis within two hours or at a mutually scheduled time.
2. The utility representative will perform a Natural Gas Sewer Safety Inspection, which may include locating the natural gas line, locating the sewer line, and performing a video inspection of the sewer line to determine if there is a conflict.
3. If the sewer safety inspection cannot eliminate the possibility of a cross bore, the utility provider will then excavate the site and inspect visually for the presence of a cross bore. If a conflict does exist, the utility provider will work with the homeowner and/or the municipality to address the cross bore and make the necessary repairs.



Raising awareness

This information is part of ongoing safety communications by Enbridge Gas Distribution and Union Gas to raise awareness about how important it is to call Ontario One Call before you begin work to clear a blocked sewer line beyond the outside walls of a building. The Technical Standards and Safety Authority requires gas distributors to have a program and public awareness campaign about sewer safety.

The Pipe Trades Labour-Management Health and Safety Committee worked in conjunction with IHSA, Enbridge Gas Distribution, and Union Gas to develop a safety advisory on Gas Line and Sewer Service Line Conflicts (W154) to help inform the service, construction, electrical, and utility industries. Check out the complete advisory at ihsa.ca. Share it with your employees and with homeowners, property managers, municipal sewer operators, and anyone else who may be involved in clearing a blocked sewer line.



Signs that a natural gas line has been damaged during the clearing of a sewer service line include bubbling water, a hissing sound, a natural gas odour, or blowing dirt.

The Natural Gas Sewer Safety Inspection described in this article may temporarily unclog or drain the sewer service line. However, this may not prevent the blockage from recurring. Sewer service line clearing may still be required.

Learn more about the natural gas sewer safety program

A natural gas utility representative will be pleased to answer general questions about the program when you call. Don't forget to ask for your free brochures, available in English and French, to provide to your employees who may be clearing sewer service lines. Brochures are also available for clients who may be requesting sewer service line clearing.



For more information:

Enbridge Sewer Safety program—call 1-888-880-8948 or visit www.enbridgegas.com/sewersafety

Union Gas Sewer Safety program—call 1-888-774-3111 or visit www.uniongas.com/safety

If you suspect a gas leak,

evacuate the building immediately and then call 911 or your local natural gas distribution emergency number from a safe distance.



Enbridge Gas Distribution
emergency number: 1-866-763-5427



Union Gas emergency
number: 1-877-969-0999