



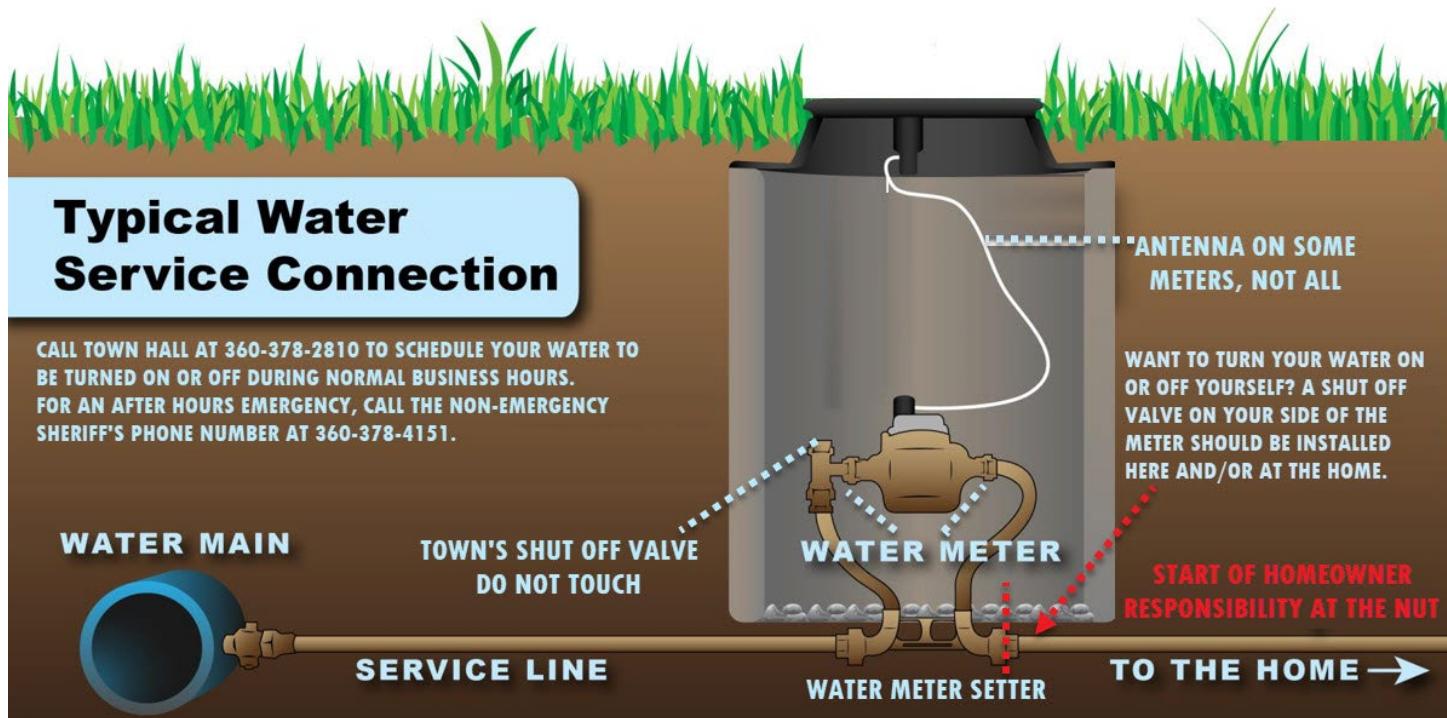
TOWN OF FRIDAY HARBOR
Post Office Box 219 • Friday Harbor, Washington 98250
(360) 378 – 2810 • FAX: (360) 378 – 5339 • www.fridayharbor.org

Water & Sewer Service Line Responsibility

The Town often receives inquiries about who is responsible for maintenance and repairs to sewer and water service lines. In an effort to educate property owners on your responsibilities and ours, we hope this flyer helps to clarify where your responsibility ends and the Town's begins.

Who is responsible for the water service line?

Property owners are responsible for the water private service line that extends from the water meter to the customer. (Friday Harbor Municipal Code Section 13.08.030.) The Town is responsible for the water meter, the water meter setter, the service line to the water main, and the water main.



Are there any shut off valve requirements for my water connection?

Each separate building that is connected to the Town water system is required to have a water shut off valve at the building. We recommend also having a shut off valve close to the water meter to be able to determine if you have an underground leak on your side of the meter to the building. If you do not have shut off valves, contact a licensed plumber to get one installed.

Does my water service require a backflow prevention assembly?

A backflow prevention assembly is a device that eliminates cross-connection or foreign liquids, gases or substances flowing backwards into our water system. Some properties within the Town limits are required to have this device in accordance with the State of Washington Administrative Code (WAC 248-54-285) and the Washington State Department of Health. These properties have annual testing requirements to ensure that nothing is coming back into our water system.

[Can I turn my water meter on or off?](#)

No, only Town Water Department crew members are authorized to service meters and turn them on or off. Please call (360) 378-2810 to arrange a date and time for meters to be turned on or off at no charge for any reason (e.g. plumbing repairs, leaving town, etc.) during normal business hours. Contact the Sheriff's non-emergency number at (360) 378-4151 if a leak occurs after hours for a water crew member to assist.

[What happens if I turn on or off my water meter?](#)

Any person who has tampered with a water meter can be found to have committed a Class I Civil Infraction and will be fined \$250 (not including statutory assessments) per infraction. Additionally, property owners are responsible for all costs associated with damaged water meters and will be billed by the Town of Friday Harbor for the repairs.

[I have a leak somewhere on my property, can the Town locate or fix it?](#)

Property owners are responsible for the water connection on their side of the water meter to their building(s), including any underground pipes. Town water staff cannot locate leaks or fix them. They can assist a licensed plumber during regular business hours with turning the meter on and off when trying to locate a leak or perform repairs.

[Do you have any tips for locating leaks?](#)

Look and listen carefully inside the house for a potential source of water flow. However, not all leaks can be heard. Check all faucets, hose bibs, and toilets. Underground pipes from the meter to your house may be the cause if nothing can be found in your building(s).

To check your toilets, add a few drops of food coloring in the tank, wait 30 minutes, and if the coloring appears in the bowl, replace your flapper valve.

[What happens if I don't repair a leak on my property?](#)

Pursuant to Friday Harbor Municipal Code, allowing leaks to be maintained is prohibited. Water service may be suspended, terminated, or cancelled if a property owner does not repair the leak.

[Can I get a break on my water bill if I have a leak?](#)

Once a leak has been repaired by a licensed plumber, a property owner may apply for leak relief. Accounts will then be audited to determine eligibility for a credit on water consumption and/or sewer overage charges for 1 month of charges.

[When do I need to get a plumbing permit?](#)

Plumbing permits are required for properties within the Town of Friday Harbor limits for all repairs or improvements made to the water service connection. In the event of an emergency, plumbing permits must be obtained the next business day after the work has been completed. Be advised that inspections are required prior to covering up any plumbing fixtures.

[Do I need to do anything to prepare for the winter?](#)

Once the weather starts to turn cold, we tend to get an increase in water leaks throughout our water system. We recommend ensuring all pipes in your home are insulated properly, including the pipes in crawl spaces, garages, basements, and attics. These exposed pipes are most susceptible to freezing. Remember the more insulation you use, the better protected your pipes will be. Additionally, disconnect garden hoses and insulate outdoor faucets (hose bibs). This reduces the chance of freezing in the short span of pipe just inside the house.

Who is responsible for the sewer service line?

Property owners are responsible for the sewer pipe (lateral) that extends from the building to the public sewer pipeline. This includes the portion within your private property as well as the portion located beneath the sidewalk and the street up to and including where the lateral connects to the public sewer main. (Friday Harbor Municipal Code Section 13.20.070.) The Town is responsible for cleaning and repairing the main lines in the streets.

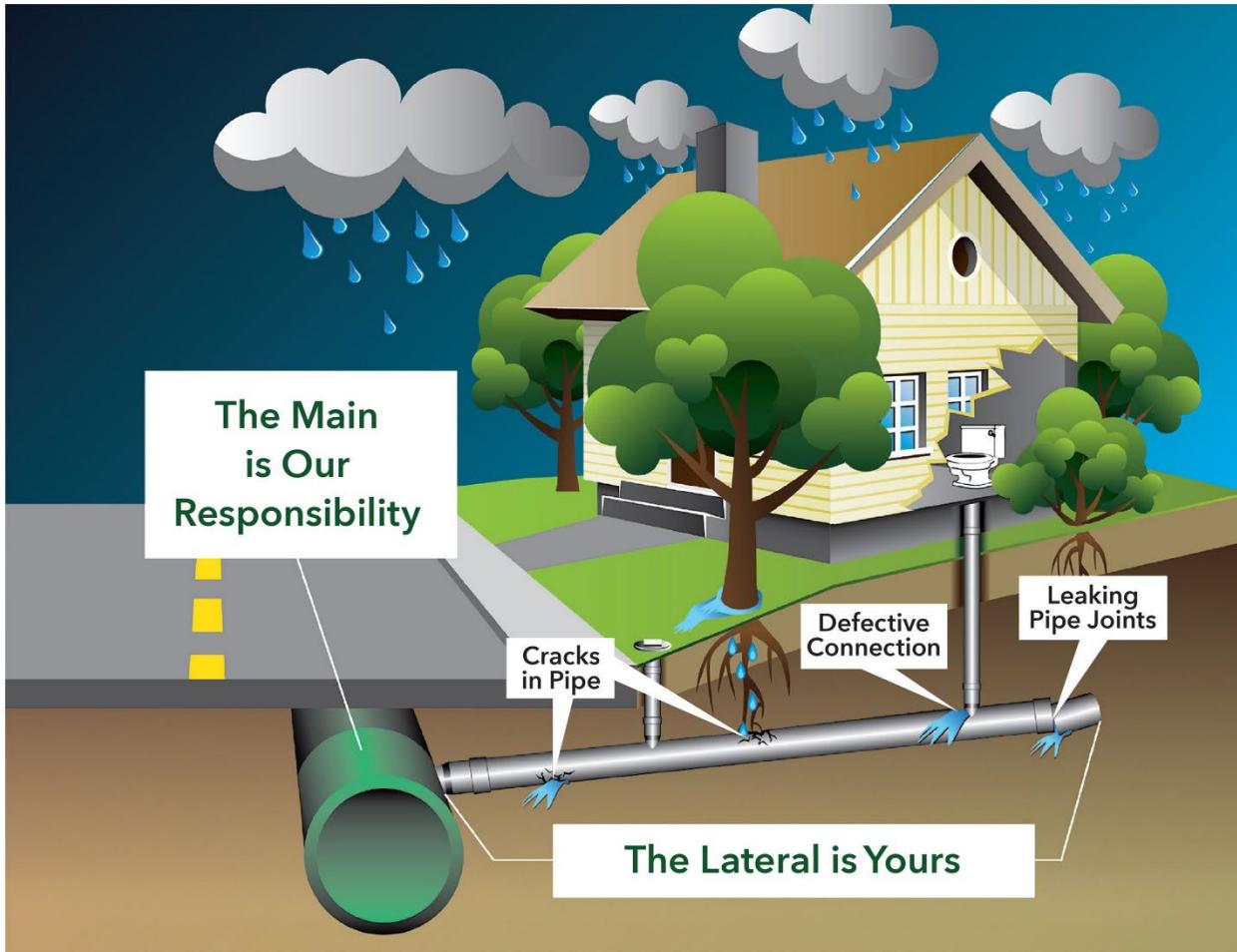


Figure 1 (Thanks to the Ross Valley Sanitary District, San Rafael, CA.)

Who is responsible for the private pump station for my sewer service?

In addition to sewer laterals, some properties have a private pump station located between the building and the Town's sewer main. Pump stations, also known as grinder pumps, are mostly buried below ground, and look like this:

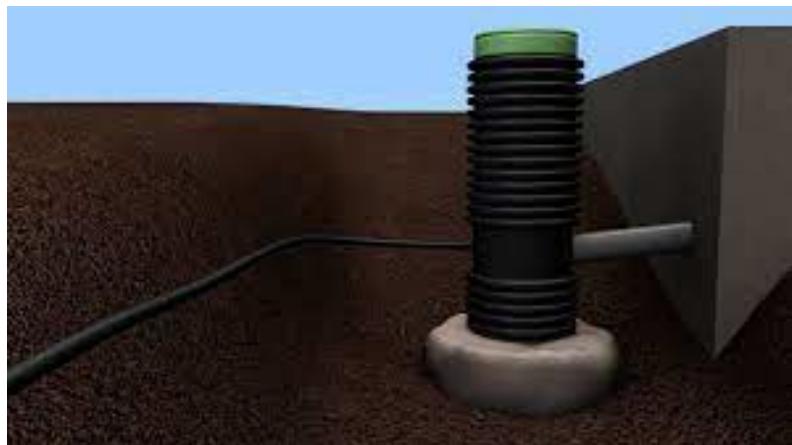


Figure 2 (Thanks to Site Specific Design, Inc.)

For property owners who have a private pump station, we offer this advice borrowed from Seattle's Valley View Sewer District:

Operations and Maintenance Guidelines for Private Pump Stations

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS PROVIDED TO GUIDE THE INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY OWNER IN OPERATING AND MAINTAINING A PRIVATE PUMP STATION:

1. The pressure sewage system is designed to handle normal sanitary sewage. Trash, garbage, hair, plastic, and other debris, if deposited into the system, may disrupt the pumping unit and cause problems and inconvenience.
 - Do not allow oils or grease into the system. Greases such as cooking oils, tallow, or bacon grease may congeal in the lines and plug or otherwise impair the normal operation of the system. Collect grease in a container and once cooled throw it in the garbage instead.
 - Also prohibited, because they may jam the pump, are disposable wipes, diapers, sanitary napkins, articles of clothing, disposable gloves, gravel, plastics, silverware, nylons, eggshells, kitty litter, and aquarium gravel.
2. The pump chamber should not be covered with dirt or other material that may hinder ventilation or access by service personnel. Surface water should be diverted away from the chamber or it may leak in and increase your operating costs through added pumping of the infiltrated surface water.
3. In the event of a power failure, as much as possible avoid laundry, bathing, toilet flushing, or the use of any water-using fixtures that drain into the system. Storage space is limited in the chamber, but with reasonable care you can minimize the chance of an overflow.
4. In the event of a pump failure, which will be indicated by the alarm light and horn, again as much as possible, avoid laundry, bathing, toilet flushing, or the use of any water-using fixtures that drain into the system.
5. Once a year, take the cover off the pump station and with the tank pumped down, hose off floats, cables, walls, and anywhere that grease has collected. * (*If you have an E-one type pump, this yearly maintenance is not necessary and is not recommended by the manufacturer.)

What things in my home enter the sewer system and where does it go?

When you use your toilet, shower, washing machine or dishwasher, wastewater leaves your home through pipes that connect to the Town's sewer system. All sewers lead to pump stations that transfer liquid waste (sludge) to the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP). The sludge is treated using a combination of filtration, aeration & disinfection processes before the water is released back into the harbor. It is critical to keep household and hazardous chemicals out of the system as these can kill the "good bacteria" that are essential to the treatment process.

What should I flush down my toilet?

The only things you should ever flush down a toilet are human waste and toilet paper. Even though some products claim to be flushable, they aren't.

What should I pour down my sink?

Some things that get poured into sinks can clog pipes and cause raw sewage backups. The majority of backups are caused by FOG (Fat, Oil and Grease) that builds up in pipes, trapping debris and creating clogs that nothing can get through. This is easily preventable if we stop and think before allowing FOG down the sink. FOG includes animal fats, cooking oil, lard, butter, shortening, batters, dairy products, salad dressings, sauces and gravy.