

# Nazareth Borough Municipal Authority

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## Understanding Your Home's Plumbing System

**Do it yourself plumbing projects are not too hard to complete as long as you understand how the plumbing system in your house works. Once you understand how things work, you can decide if a specific plumbing repair is a do it yourself job or one that requires a plumber.**

Your home's plumbing system is composed of three parts: the traps, the vent, and the drainpipes and sewer lines. Any one of these parts can create problems with your home's plumbing system, so knowing what each part does is important when trying to repair it

**The Traps:** A trap, or as it is called, a P trap is the odd looking thing underneath all of your sinks. The trap looks like the letter U. This design allows water to remain at the bottom of the U, and this prevents sewer odors from coming up the drain. In fact, each and every plumbing fixture in your house has a trap attached to it; you just do not always see it. There is a trap on your toilet, bathtub, dishwasher, washing machine, etc.

There is one problem with traps. A trap is great place for a hair clog, a buildup of soap scum, and children's toys. Clogs in the trap are the most frequent plumbing problem homeowner's face. Often you will notice that the water drains slowly. This is the first indication that you might have something partially blocking your trap. A plunger works well at removing these partial blockages.

**The Vent Pipes:** These are those pipes that stick out of your roof. Many people do not know what these pipes are for, or why they are there. Vent pipes are either attached to each plumbing fixture in your house, or to a group of fixtures. These vent pipes allow air to enter into your sewer lines to help the sewer lines drain freely. Too often people are quick to assume that there is a clog in a plumbing fixture if it is draining improperly. Many times the cause of the problem is a clogged vent pipe.

Anything can clog a vent pipe; a bird's nest, a bee's nest, leaves, trash and basically anything else you can think of. A qualified plumber will always check the vents of the house to make sure they are not blocked. Just remember the vents are located on your roof. Make sure you follow all safety precautions before you attempt to check your house's vents.

**The Drainpipes and Sewer Lines:** These are the actual pipes that carry the sewage through your house and into the public sewer system. This is where most people assume their plumbing problems originate, and sometimes they are correct.

Most houses have what is called a "clean out." A clean out is an access point where an auger (aka snake) is inserted to clean out the drainpipes and sewer lines. Clean outs can be located sticking out of a wall or in the floor of the basement, or may simply be sticking out of the ground in your yard.

Once you find the clean out to your house, you can save money by renting or using your own auger, instead of calling a plumber. Sometimes you will be forced to call a plumber especially if you have tree roots growing in your sewer pipe.

Now that you know the parts of a plumbing system, you can decide whether or not to tackle some of these plumbing projects on your own or if you need to call a plumber. If you are experiencing a plumbing problem that you are having a hard time trying to resolve, please contact the Nazareth Borough Municipal Authority at 610-759-0727, and our staff can assist you in finding a solution to your sewer problem. Just remember any repair to the sewer pipe in your yard requires a non-fee permit obtained at the office of the Nazareth Borough Municipal Authority located at 872 Tatamy Rd, Nazareth.

### **Preventing Sewer Problems in Your Home or Commercial Property**

The Nazareth Borough Municipal Authority wants to help you save money and prevent costly sewer problems from arising in your home or office. You may not realize that you play a big part in keeping your sewer system in good repair.

Keep grease out of your drains. This includes grease from bacon, hamburger and anything else you may be preparing. Instead, pour the grease into a milk container and let it harden. Then dispose of the grease in the garbage.

Be careful about what you flush down your toilets. The only product you should ever flush is toilet paper. When it comes to baby wipes, tampons, napkins, diapers and paper towels, throw them into the trash.

Your garbage disposal is not intended for such things as chicken bones, watermelon rinds, and potato peels. These items do not break down well enough to pass through drainpipes and sewer lines. These items should be thrown into the trash.

Hazardous waste such as cleaning fluids, paint and anti-freeze must NEVER be poured down the drain. Watch the newspapers for times and places to dispose of hazardous waste provided by Northampton County.

Also clean out your bathroom drains regularly to get rid of hair and other debris.

Your home or business sewer system can be kept clean and in proper working order for a much longer period of time if you keep these ideas in mind at all times.



**NAZARETH BOROUGH MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY**

872 TATAMY ROAD, P.O. BOX A, NAZARETH, PA 18064

Phone (610) 759-0727 Fax (610) 746-0277

*Dean Minnich, Plant Manager*

*Nicole Romanishan, Office Administrator*

*Email: [dminnich@thenbma.com](mailto:dminnich@thenbma.com)*

*Email: [nromanishan@thenbma.com](mailto:nromanishan@thenbma.com)*

Dear Customer:

Re: Ownership Form

Enclosed is an Ownership Form for you to complete. The purpose of this form is to be certain the Authority has the correct name(s) and middle initial(s) listed as the property owner(s). If you are a renter, please forward this letter and form to the property owner. Simply fill in the information as described below.

DATE: The date you complete the form.

ACCOUNT NUMBER: This is your current account number. You may find this at the top of your quarterly sewer bill.

PROPERTY ADDRESS: The address for which this ownership form is being completed.

TOTAL NUMBER OF UNITS: A single residential property is one unit. Each additional unit is described as a separate space that has a bathroom and provides a separate income. (ex. Beauty salon, rental space)

NAME (S): List the names of all current property owners, all persons listed on deed of property.

BUSINESS NAME: This may be completed if there is a business located at the property address.

MAILING ADDRESS: This is the address of the property owner. This may be completed if the mailing address is different than the property address.

SIGNATURE OF OWNER (S): When all the above information has been completed, please sign and date the form and return in the envelope provided.

Please return the completed form to the Authority as soon as possible. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call the office at the above telephone number during our business hours. (7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.)

BILLING PROCEDURES: Sewer invoices are processed quarterly in February, May, August, and November. These invoices are based on the prior three months of water usage as indicated on the water bills issued by the PA American Water Company or Easton Suburban Water Authority.

## **Who is Responsible for What?**

**There has been a lot of public confusion as to who is responsible for what part of the sewer pipe leaving their house. We must first make two definitions. The first definition is "building sewer." The building sewer is defined as the sewer pipe inside the curb, or the pipe that is on private property. The second definition is "Lateral." A lateral is defined as the pipe from the curb to the main located in the street or public property.**

**The homeowner is responsible for the building sewer, and the Nazareth Borough Municipal Authority (NBMA) is responsible for the lateral. However, there are exceptions to the rule. A lateral becomes the homeowner's responsibility when the NBMA determines the blockage was caused by tree roots from a tree located on the homeowner's property, or by other materials that may have caused the blockage. Other materials can be grease, diapers, tampons, napkins, paper towels, baby wipes "flushable wipes" and other items that should not be flushed down the toilet.**

**The NBMA is here to assist you when these problems arise. Homeowners call the water company when they have a water problem, they call the gas company when they have a natural gas problem, but they hesitate to call the sewer authority when a sewer issue occurs. The professional staff of the NBMA will offer guidance and assistance when sewer issues occur.**