

## Management of Sewer Laterals to Reduce Potential for Cross-Bores

Sewer laterals from the main to the curb line and from the curb line to the building represent hazards to contractors, utilities and the public because they often go unmarked during the excavation of other underground utilities. Dangers can result due to cross-boring into the un-marked sewer lateral by another utility, such as a gas company. The cross-bored pipe may be damaged at some later point when the sewer lateral is cleaned or routed out. If the cross-bore was a gas line and it is cut by the sewer router, the results could be catastrophic.

Often the sewer lateral from the curb line to the building is privately owned. The lateral from the main to the curb line is sometimes owned by the sewage agencies and sometimes owned by the property owner. Regardless of the ownership, it is advisable that greater attention be given to protecting sewer laterals.

A private property owner is not notified by PA One Call when work is planned in the public right-of-way, even though the property owner may own the lateral in that area. In contrast, a sewage agency will receive notice, and thus is able to provide communication to the PA One Caller. In addition, repair or replacement of a lateral in the public right-of-way is more difficult for a property owner to accomplish than for a sewage agency, particularly if the property is residential.

In an effort to reduce the possibility of damage to laterals from cross-bores, sewage agencies in Pennsylvania should consider implementing the following:

1. Develop and implement rules that require that any new underground sewer laterals (both publicly and privately owned) are constructed such that they can be located from above ground and marked prior to excavation by others.

Because Municipal Authorities and Municipalities may establish rules and regulations governing the construction of sewer facilities discharging into their systems, the PWEA recommends that sewage agencies adopt rules, regulations and standard details that require developers and others to construct new underground sewer utilities with tracer wire or other systems that allow locating of these underground utilities from the surface. If the laterals can be more easily identified, marking of these laterals is more feasible prior to excavation or directional drilling by others.

In addition, require locating and recording coordinates using GPS or field survey of all bends, tees, wyes and cleanouts as part of any construction or repair work. By storing this information digitally, the actual location of underground facilities can be available for use in the future.



**Router Ready to Cut a Cross-Bored Gas Pipe**

2. Even if laterals are not owned by the sewage agency, consider making lateral information available to the PA One Call caller if any is available.

In some cases, drawings or other information about laterals is available to the sewage agency, such as information noted on record drawings of sewer construction. By making this available to the caller during the PA One Call process, those making the new excavation or directional drill can be more informed and thus more capable of avoiding damage to the laterals.

3. Consider owning, operating, and maintaining all lateral sewers to the curb line or to the edge of the public right-of-way.

4. Develop a means of having sewer laterals televised after an HDD project is completed by another utility.

After HDD installation of another utility, televising of the sewer laterals provides positive demonstration that a cross-bore has not occurred. The actual procedure for this televising will likely vary between sewage agencies.

5. Develop a means of sharing data, such as lateral records that may have televised already.



Gas Line Bored Through a Sewer Lateral

### **PWEA Mission Statement**

**Enhance the knowledge and abilities of Pennsylvania's wastewater professionals, promote sound water policies, and promote public awareness of the need to protect water quality.**

