



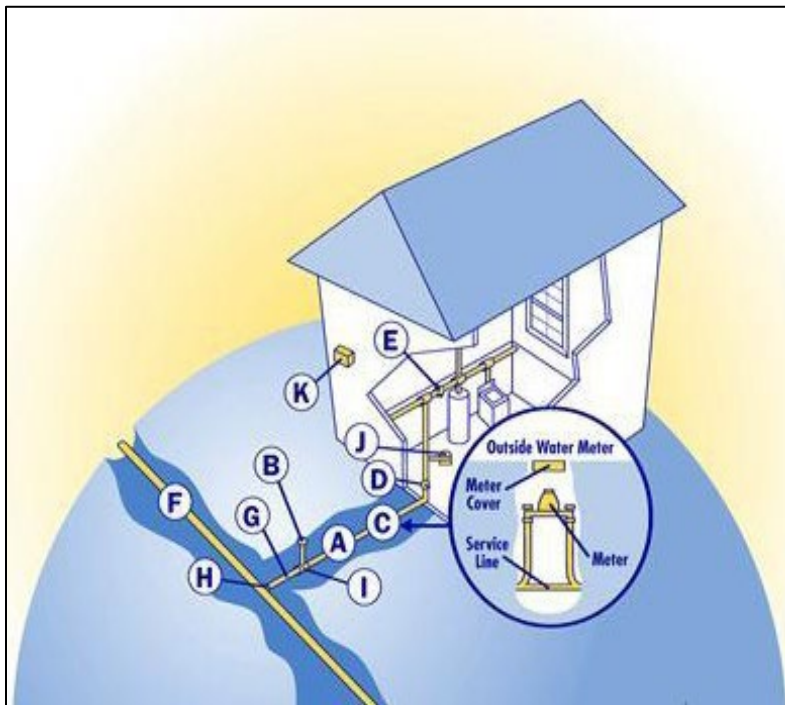
A Primer on Water & Sewer Infrastructure

Who Owns What?

A common question we receive is “Who fixes a leak on my water/sewer line?” The answer depends on where the problem is.

The diagram below shows a typical household water system. You own the items with titles in **blue text** and are responsible for keeping them in good repair. The remaining items (**titles in red text**) are owned by the Reserve Township Water and Sewer Department.

Water Infrastructure



A. **Service line**, the portion of pipe from the curb valve, located at or near your property line, into your home or business.

B. **Curb box and curb box lid**, usually at grade level somewhere in the front yard, visible by a round plate about 3 inches in diameter which allows access to the curb valve. Note: it is the property owner’s responsibility to make sure this is kept accessible – please don’t cover it with landscaping or sidewalks. This is very important if water service needs to be turned off for any reason.

C. **Outside meter pit and cover**, if your meter is located outside in an underground vault. The pit is a cylindrical ceramic casing. The metal cover is about the size of a dinner plate. It’s important to keep this covered and dry to prevent damage to the meter.

D. **Main valve**, also known as the cellar valve or house valve, located inside your premises at the service line’s point of entry (normally before the meter).

E. **Pressure-reducing valve**, an optional device which regulates the pressure of water entering the premises, is usually located on your plumbing near the water meter or hot water heater. It is the responsibility of the customer to verify the water pressure in the home to determine if the pressure is too high or too low to operate their internal plumbing systems. A licensed plumber can assist the homeowner in determining the proper solution to any pressure questions.

F. **Water main**, owned and maintained by Reserve Township.

G. **Service connection**, the portion of pipe that runs from the water main to the curb valve. Please note – ownership of this portion of the line varies from town to town. In Reserve Township, this portion is the responsibility of the property owner, even if it extends into a roadway.

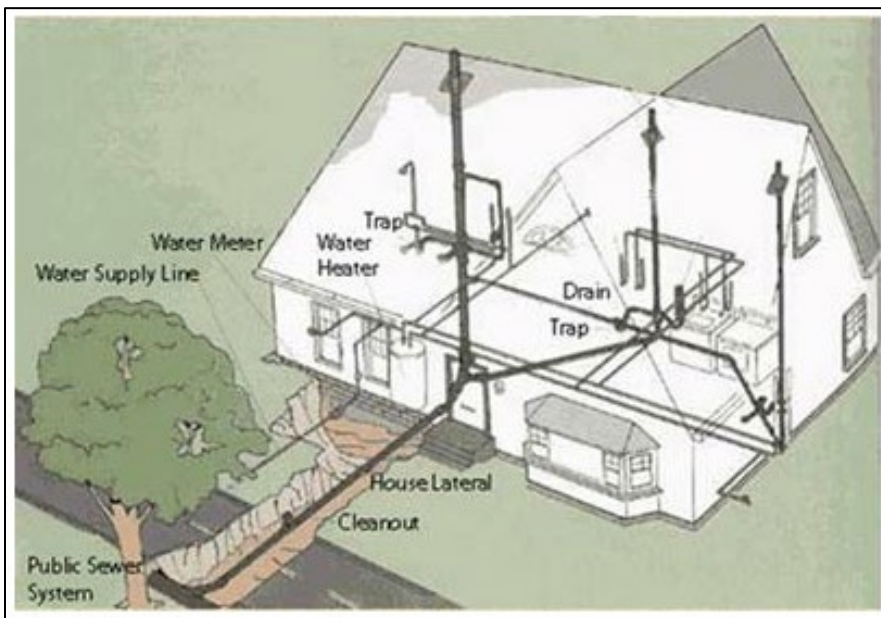
H. **Tap or corporation stop**, the point at which the service connection pipe is connected to the water main.

- I. **Curb valve or curb stop**, located underground inside the curb box (see item B), normally near the property line. The curb valve connects the service connection to your service line and operates as a shut-off valve. Even though owned by the customer, it's a code violation for anyone other than the Township Water Department to turn the valve on or off.
- J. **Water meter**, a device that measures your water usage. It can be located outside in a meter pit or inside the house near where the service line enters. When water is running, you should be able to see the dial or register moving. The Water Department has the right to inspect and test the meter to ensure it's working properly. Tampering or otherwise interfering with the meter is a Township code violation.
- K. **Remote register**, a device that allows us to read the meter in your basement without having to enter your home or business. It's a small black box, usually attached to the outside of the home with a wire that runs to the meter. When Township workers take the quarterly meter readings, you will notice them tapping the reader with a handheld device that captures the data for transfer into our utility billing system.

Sewer Infrastructure

A sewer lateral runs from the Reserve Township sewer main to your internal plumbing. The entire sewer lateral is the responsibility of the property owner. It can be constructed of PVC plastic pipe or, in older homes, terracotta clay pipe. Aging pipes can crack and allow infiltration of groundwater into the sewer system.

The following description of a home sewer system is provided by 3 Rivers Wet Weather:



How Homes are Connected to the Sewer System

A basic understanding of how your home is connected to the sewer system is important.

Every time we turn on a faucet, wash a load of laundry or flush the toilet, we generate wastewater. The average person in Allegheny County uses 100 gallons/day.

As we use the water, it flows into a drain in the home and passes through a trap, a U-shaped pipe that holds water and prevents sewer gases from entering the home. If the trap becomes dry from non-use, you may notice a sewer odor; pouring water into the unused drain will refill the trap and eliminate the odor.

After passing through the trap, the wastewater continues to flow downward through large drain pipes that eventually exit the home underground at one location—through a pipe called a house lateral. The house lateral usually runs out to the street from either the front or rear of your property where it connects to the public sewer system through a Y-shaped pipe called a wye.

Laterals generally have a cleanout, an opening that allows for removing any debris or obstructions that might block the flow of wastewater. A certified plumber can help with televising the lateral and cleaning out backups. It's a code violation to connect roof gutters, surface water or otherwise discharge stormwater into the septic system.