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FREE HOMEOWNER GUIDE

The Westside Homeowner's Sewer & Repair Guide

How to spot sewer trouble early, what a camera inspection really shows, and how to decide between repair, trenchless replacement, and a dig — written for the older homes of Mar Vista, Santa Monica, Culver City, Venice, Brentwood, the Palisades, and the rest of West LA.

INSIDE THIS GUIDE

- 8 warning signs your sewer line is failing
- What to do in the first 10 minutes of a sewage backup
- Repair vs. replace: an honest decision framework
- How trenchless work saves your yard — and when it can't be used

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(310) 663-7666

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START HERE

Why Westside sewer lines fail

If your home is in Mar Vista, Culver City, Santa Monica, Venice, or anywhere else on the Westside, there's a good chance it was built before 1970. That matters more for your sewer line than almost anything else.

The pipe that carries wastewater from your house to the city main — your sewer lateral — is your responsibility, not the city's. On the Westside, most laterals are one of three aging materials:

1. **Clay pipe (most pre-1960s homes)**
   Clay laterals are joined in short segments, and every joint is an open invitation to tree roots. The ficus, magnolia, and jacaranda trees that make Westside streets beautiful send roots straight into those joints looking for water. Roots catch waste, waste builds up, and the line backs up — usually on a weekend.

2. **Cast iron (1940s–1970s)**
   Cast iron corrodes from the inside out. The bottom of the pipe channels out first, leaving rough, scaled walls that snag everything. By year 50–75, many cast-iron lines are more rust than pipe.

3. **Orangeburg (scattered mid-century installs)**
   A tar-paper pipe used when metal was scarce. It deforms, blisters, and collapses with age. If a camera inspection finds Orangeburg, replacement isn't a question of if — only when.

The honest takeaway

An aging lateral doesn't mean panic — it means information beats guessing. The problems above develop over years, and nearly all of them announce themselves early if you know the signs. That's what the next page is for.

CATCH IT EARLY

8 warning signs your sewer line is in trouble

One sign alone can be a simple clog. Two or more together usually mean the problem is in the main line — and worth a camera look before it becomes a backup.

1. **Multiple slow drains at once**
   One slow sink is a sink problem. A slow tub, toilet, and kitchen sink together point to the main line.

2. **Gurgling toilets or drains**
   Air trapped behind a partial blockage escapes backward through the nearest fixture. Gurgling after you run the washer is a classic early sign.

3. **Sewage odors inside or in the yard**
   A sound sewer system is sealed. Persistent sewer smell near drains, the foundation, or a soggy patch of lawn means waste is escaping somewhere.

4. **Water backing up in strange places**
   Run the washing machine and the shower backs up? Flush the toilet and the tub fills? Fixtures "talking" to each other is a main-line signature.

5. **Unusually green or sunken lawn strips**
   A leaking lateral fertilizes the grass above it — a lush green stripe or a soft, sunken trench along the pipe's path.

6. **Repeated clogs in the same drain**
   If you're snaking the same line every few months, the snake is punching a hole through roots that grow right back. The clog is a symptom.

7. **Foundation cracks or pest activity**
   Long-term leaks undermine soil and attract rodents and insects to a food-and-water source. Rare, but serious when paired with other signs.

8. **Your home is 50+ years old and never inspected**
   Not a symptom — a risk factor. If you don't know what your lateral is made of, a one-time camera inspection answers it for good.

Seeing two or more of these?

Talk to a licensed plumber now — (310) 663-7666 · 24/7, including weekends and holidays

EMERGENCY PLAYBOOK

Sewage backing up right now? Do this first.

Take a breath — this is fixable, and the next ten minutes matter more than the next ten hours. Here's the order of operations.

1. **Stop using water — every fixture**
   Every flush, shower, and dishwasher cycle adds water to a line with nowhere to go. Stop all water use in the house immediately, and ask everyone at home to do the same.

2. **Keep people and pets away from the backup**
   Sewage carries bacteria. Close off the affected bathroom or room, and keep kids and pets out until it's cleaned and disinfected.

3. **Find your cleanout and check it**
   Most Westside homes have a capped pipe (the cleanout) near the foundation or in the front yard. If it's overflowing, the blockage is in the lateral — good to know before you call.

4. **Shut off the main water if it's still rising**
   Your main shutoff is usually at the front of the house or at the meter near the sidewalk. Turning it off stops anyone from accidentally adding water to the problem.

5. **Call a licensed plumber — not a drain-only franchise**
   A backup like this needs a camera and a real diagnosis, not just a quick punch-through that clogs again next month. We dispatch licensed plumbers 24/7 and give you a flat price before any work begins.

While you wait

Snap phone photos of the backup and any affected flooring — useful if you file an insurance claim. Don't pour chemical drain cleaner into a backed-up line; it sits in the pipe and can burn the person who opens it.

We answer 24/7 — day or night, weekends and holidays

(310) 663-7666 · Licensed & insured · Flat-rate price approved before we start

DIAGNOSIS, NOT GUESSWORK

What a sewer camera actually shows

We never quote sewer work blind. A camera inspection runs a high-resolution video head through your lateral and shows you — on screen, in real time — exactly what's happening underground.

What the camera finds

- ✓ Pipe material: clay, cast iron, ABS, or Orangeburg
- ✓ Bellies (sags) where waste pools and collects
- ✓ Channeling and corrosion in cast iron
- ✓ Root intrusion — and exactly where it enters
- ✓ Cracks, offsets, and separated joints
- ✓ Full collapses and how far they extend

Why this protects you

The camera turns an invisible problem into evidence you can see. You watch the footage with us, we mark the exact depth and location of each issue, and the quote covers the real problem — not a worst-case guess. If the line only needs a cleaning, that's what we'll tell you. We never sell work you don't need.

Buying or selling an older Westside home?

A pre-purchase sewer inspection is one of the smartest checks you can run on a pre-1970 house. General home inspections don't cover the lateral, and a failed line discovered after closing is the buyer's problem. Seeing the pipe's condition before you sign puts the repair conversation in the negotiation, where it belongs.

What you get from a New Pro inspection

Recorded video of the full run, a plain-English explanation of what we found, the located depth and position of any problem, and a flat-rate quote for any work the line actually needs — which you're free to approve, hold, or decline. No pressure, no surprises.

See your line before you decide anything

Book a camera inspection · (310) 663-7666 · newproplumbing.com

THE DECISION FRAMEWORK

Repair, trenchless, or dig: an honest guide

There’s no one right answer — there’s the right answer for your pipe, your yard, and your plans for the house. Here’s how we think it through with you.

A

Spot repair — when damage is isolated

One root intrusion, one cracked segment, one bad joint in an otherwise sound line: a targeted repair fixes the section without touching the rest. Smart when the camera shows the remaining pipe has real life left.

B

Trenchless lining — a new pipe inside the old one

An epoxy-saturated liner is inverted into the existing pipe and cured in place, creating a smooth, jointless new pipe inside the old host. No open trench across the yard — typically just small access points. Roots have no joints left to enter. Best when the old pipe still holds its shape.

C

Trenchless pipe bursting — full replacement, no open trench

A bursting head is pulled through the old line, fracturing it outward while dragging a brand-new HDPE pipe into its place. A true replacement sized to code, done through two access pits instead of a yard-length trench. The usual answer for collapsed clay or Orangeburg.

D

Traditional excavation — when it’s honestly required

Severe bellies, fully collapsed runs with no path for a bursting head, or lines too shallow or misaligned for trenchless methods sometimes require open excavation. When a dig is the right call, we’ll show you why on camera — and restore the site cleanly when we’re done. We leave no trace behind.

Questions worth asking any plumber (including us)

- ✓ Can I see the camera footage myself?
- ✓ Why this method instead of the alternatives?
- ✓ Are you licensed and insured, and is the work permitted to code?
- ✓ What’s the pipe material and where exactly is the damage?
- ✓ Is the price flat-rate and approved before work starts?
- ✓ What warranty covers the workmanship?

MONEY, HANDLED HONESTLY

What drives the cost of sewer work

Every line is different, so trustworthy pricing starts with a camera — not a number pulled from the air. These are the factors that actually move the price, so you can read any quote intelligently.

1. **Length and depth of the run**
   A lateral is quoted by what it takes to reach and renew it. Longer runs and deeper pipe mean more material and more access work.

2. **Method: spot repair vs. lining vs. bursting vs. dig**
   Isolated repairs cost less than full replacements; trenchless methods usually cost less overall than excavation once you count yard, hardscape, and landscaping restoration.

3. **What's above the pipe**
   A line under open lawn is simpler than one under a driveway, mature tree, retaining wall, or city sidewalk. Trenchless methods exist largely to avoid destroying what's on the surface.

4. **Permits and city requirements**
   Sewer replacement on the Westside is permitted work, and some jobs involve the public right-of-way. Permits protect you at resale — a quote that skips them isn't cheaper, it's incomplete.

5. **Condition of the host pipe**
   Lining needs a pipe that still holds shape; a collapsed section can change the method. This is exactly why we scope first and quote second.

How flat-rate pricing protects you

We diagnose on camera, explain what we found, and give you one upfront price you approve before any work begins. No hourly billing, no surprise line items, no "while we were in there" charges. The price reflects your actual job — and you stay in control of the decision. Ask us about financing options on larger replacements.

Get an honest quote

Request your free estimate · (310) 663-7666 · newproplumbing.com

PROTECT THE LINE YOU HAVE

The Westside sewer-care checklist

Most sewer emergencies are years in the making. A little prevention — and knowing your own plumbing — buys you time, options, and calm.

Do these once (this month)

- ✓ Find your sewer cleanout and photograph its location
- ✓ Find your main water shutoff and test that it turns
- ✓ Note your home's build year and likely pipe material
- ✓ If the home is 50+ years old, book a one-time camera inspection

Do these always

- ✓ Nothing down the drain but water, waste, and toilet paper — "flushable" wipes aren't
- ✓ Keep fats, oils, and grease out of the kitchen sink; they harden in cool underground pipe
- ✓ Use drain screens in showers and tubs to keep hair out of the line
- ✓ Skip chemical drain cleaners — they damage older pipe and rarely clear root clogs
- ✓ Think twice before planting thirsty trees over the lateral's path
- ✓ Treat any repeat clog as a message, not a maintenance routine

Consider on a schedule

If your line has known root intrusion but isn't ready for replacement, periodic hydro jetting — high-pressure water cleaning — clears roots and scale far more thoroughly than snaking and buys real time. We'll tell you honestly whether maintenance or a fix is the smarter spend for your pipe.

The fridge-magnet rule

The cheapest sewer repair is the one you scheduled on your terms — not the one that scheduled itself on a Saturday night. Know your shutoffs, know your pipe, and keep a licensed plumber's number where you can find it.

WHO WROTE THIS GUIDE

Why Westside homeowners call New Pro

New Pro Plumbing is the family-owned, owner-led Westside plumber — serving Mar Vista, Santa Monica, Culver City, Venice, Brentwood, Pacific Palisades, Westwood, Westchester, Playa Vista, and the surrounding communities since 2010.

Honest, upfront pricing

Flat-rate pricing you approve before we start. No hourly billing, no surprise charges — and we never sell work you don't need.

Fast, 24/7 local response

Family-owned and based right here on the Westside. Available day and night, including holidays, with stocked trucks that often fix it on the first visit.

Real expertise for real LA homes

Trenchless sewer, hydro jetting, leak detection, and gas-line work with permits — we know the clay, cast iron, and galvanized pipe older Westside homes are built on.

Treated like family

Owner-led service, fully bilingual in English and Spanish, and so clean and careful our customers say we leave no trace behind.

Quick answers

Are you available 24/7? Yes. We answer the phone and dispatch licensed plumbers day or night, including weekends and holidays.

Do you offer trenchless sewer repair? Yes — pipe lining and pipe bursting, so most jobs don't tear up your yard.

Can you inspect a sewer line before I buy a home? Yes. A pre-purchase camera inspection shows you the line's condition before you close.

Do you speak Spanish? Sí. We're fully bilingual and happy to serve you in English or Spanish.

Talk to a licensed plumber now — 24/7

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This guide is general homeowner education, not a diagnosis of your specific plumbing system. Every home and sewer line is different; conditions, methods, and outcomes vary by job. © 2026 New Pro Plumbing. All rights reserved.