

# Guidelines for Contractors

These guidelines provide private sewer lateral (PSL) testing requirements and procedures to enable plumbing contractors to help their customers meet Regional Private Sewer Lateral Program requirements and obtain a Compliance Certificate. To learn about the background, purpose, and areas affected by the PSL Program or to review the PSL Ordinance, please visit [www.eastbaypsl.com](http://www.eastbaypsl.com).

## EAST BAY REGIONAL PRIVATE SEWER LATERAL PROGRAM

### Regional PSL Program Inspections

A PSL inspection is required for a property to obtain a Compliance Certificate. The purpose of the inspection is for EBMUD to witness a verification test demonstrating that all PSLs associated with the parcel are leak-free and only convey wastewater. No stormwater may be conveyed to the sanitary sewer system.

The inspection process includes the steps outlined below:

Step 1: Check Parcel Information and Number of Laterals ([page 1](#))

Step 2: Check Lateral Condition and Non-Sanitary Sewer Connection ([page 2](#))

Step 3: Obtain Required Municipal Permits ([page 2](#))

Step 4: Complete Required Work ([page 2](#))

Step 5: Schedule an Inspection with EBMUD and Pay Compliance Certificate Fee on behalf of the Property Owner\* ([page 3](#))

Step 6: Set Up Water or Air Verification Test ([page 3](#))

Step 7: Pass Water or Air Verification Test ([page 4](#))

Step 8: Print or Download Compliance Certificate ([page 4](#))

### Inspection and Contractor Requirements

Please follow all scheduling instructions ([see page 3](#)) and be aware of special requirements for properties within a Homeowners' Association, with more than one lateral, within Alameda Point, or within the Port of Oakland.

To keep the PSL Program functioning efficiently, EBMUD has expectations regarding Contractor<sup>1</sup> conduct towards EBMUD inspectors/staff, which are outlined in the section on Expectations for Contractor Conduct ([see page 7](#)).

### Inspection Process

#### Step 1: Check Parcel Information and Number of Laterals

A Compliance Certificate is issued when *all* PSLs associated with a *parcel* pass the verification test. If the parcel contains a sewer pipe system or multiple laterals, the entire sewer pipe system, including private manholes and other appurtenances, must be tested. Obtain parcel information including parcel address, APN (parcel number), and boundary. Determine the total number of laterals and private manholes (if any) on the parcel. If there are private sewer mains or manholes on the parcel, please refer to the Guidelines for Main and Manhole Testing at [www.eastbaypsl.com](http://www.eastbaypsl.com).

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this document, Contractor refers to any individual and/or representative of an agency scheduling a PSL inspection on behalf of a property owner, including any individual and/or agent on site for the inspection.

## Step 2: Check Lateral Condition and Non-Sanitary Sewer Connection

Check the lateral for leaks or other defects and advise the property owner if work is needed. Sewer laterals should convey sewage and liquid waste only; check to ensure there are no non-sanitary sewer connections. A non-sanitary sewer connection (illicit connection) is a violation of the PSL Ordinance, and EBMUD inspectors look for them during inspections. Some of the more common sources of inflow include roof drain downspouts, storm drains, outdoor floor drains, outdoor sinks, indoor sump pumps, and outdoor trenches or channels that *directly* or *indirectly* convey stormwater into the sanitary sewer. EBMUD expects that contractors have reviewed all potential sources of inflow **PRIOR** to the inspection window and are prepared to demonstrate that these sources have been disconnected and/or rerouted per city code. This will make the inspection more efficient and save time. Be prepared to grant the EBMUD inspector access to the area in question, run water with a garden hose, and/or CCTV the pipe to demonstrate that there are no illicit connections. Please note that if it appears there may be an illicit connection and the contractor is not prepared to confirm it has been removed, another appointment will be required and the associated rescheduling fee will be incurred.

If no work is needed, proceed to Step 5, with the exception of Emeryville, where a permit is required even if no work is needed (i.e., a test as-is scenario).

NOTE: During the installation of new gas lines by Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), some private sewer laterals may have been pierced or completely bored through – known as a cross bore. Underground Service Alert does not typically mark private sewer laterals and as a result, cross bores may go undetected and if damaged, create a potentially hazardous situation. For gas line cross bore information, visit PG&E's website at <http://www.pge.com/myhome/edusafety/gaselectricsafety/sewercleaningsafety/>. If you suspect a gas line cross bore, call PG&E at 1-800-743-5000. If you suspect a gas leak, warn inhabitants, evacuate the area and call 911 and PG&E at 1-800-743-5000.

## Step 3: Obtain Required Municipal Permits

Appropriate building and/or sewer permits must be obtained before beginning PSL repair or replacement. PSL repair, replacement, and testing must be performed in accordance with local ordinance requirements and the Regional PSL Program Ordinance, which is available online at <http://www.eastbaypsl.com>. For local ordinance and permit requirements, contact the agency where work is being performed. For properties in the City of Emeryville, a permit is required even when no work will be performed (i.e., in a test as-is scenario). If excavation is needed, call 811 or visit <https://usanorth811.org> to get a ticket from USA North 811 at least two working days before you dig.

City of Alameda	(510) 747-7930
City of Albany	(510) 528-5760
City of Emeryville Building Department	(510) 596-4310
City of Oakland	(510) 238-3891
City of Piedmont Public Works Department	(510) 420-3050
Stege Sanitary District	(510) 524-4668

## Step 4: Complete Required Work

Complete any work needed to bring the PSL into compliance, including permanently disconnecting any cross-connections to the stormwater system. If you accidentally break an EBMUD water main, please call EBMUD at 866-403-2683 to report it immediately.

## **Step 5: Schedule an Inspection with EBMUD and Pay Compliance Certificate Fee on behalf of the Property Owner\***

After work on the PSL is completed and verification of no illicit connections, go online to [www.eastbaypsl.com](http://www.eastbaypsl.com) to schedule an inspection for EBMUD to witness a water or air pressure verification test on the entire lateral, except in Alameda and Albany, where only the upper lateral needs to be tested. Payment of the Compliance Certificate fee is made by credit card.

Contractors are required to provide the name, mailing address and email of the property owner when the appointment is scheduled.

***Contractors must be ready to conduct the verification test and demonstrate no illicit connections at the beginning of the inspection appointment window. Contractors who are not prepared will be required to reschedule the inspection and be charged a rescheduling fee.***

\* Special appointments are required for the following types of properties, and these inspections may **not** be scheduled online:

- **Multilateral parcel** (i.e., more than one lateral on the parcel) **OR** a parcel within a **Homeowner's Association (HOA)**, go to <https://www.eastbaypsl.com/guidelines.html>, complete the Multilateral Pre-Inspection Form or the HOA Pre-inspection Form, and upload a sewer map showing all laterals, private mains, and private manholes of the parcel or parcel group. The form must be submitted **two weeks** ahead of the desired inspection date.
- For **Port of Oakland** property, an EBMUD Port of Oakland PSL Form must first be submitted to the Port for approval. Download the form here: <https://www.eastbaypsl.com/guidelines.html>. Once it is signed by the Port, submit the form to [psl@ebmud.com](mailto:psl@ebmud.com).
- For properties within **Alameda Point**, an EBMUD Alameda Point Form can be downloaded here: <https://www.eastbaypsl.com/guidelines.html>. It must be submitted to City of Alameda for approval. Once it is signed by the City, submit the form to [psl@ebmud.com](mailto:psl@ebmud.com).

EBMUD will contact you with instructions for how to schedule a special appointment once the required form has been reviewed and approved. We appreciate your patience and will contact you; please do not schedule these appointments online.

If you schedule an inspection online for a multilateral parcel, a property within an HOA, or a property within the Port of Oakland or Alameda Point, EBMUD may cancel your online appointment or direct the EBMUD inspector not to perform the inspection, in which case you will be required to reschedule and pay all applicable fees.

## **Step 6: Set Up Water or Air Verification Test**

Choose either a hydrostatic (water) test or a low-pressure air test on the lateral to demonstrate that the PSL meets the Regional PSL Program compliance requirements (see Verification Test Setups, below). To set up a valid test, the PSL must be connected to the sewer main or manhole. Plugging or capping the PSL close to the main or manhole without connection is considered a test set up failure.

For new construction, the foundation of all structures must be in place, along with all lateral(s) and cleanout(s).

An abandoned sewer lateral, or part thereof, shall be sealed in an approved manner (check City requirements). All open ends of the abandoned sewer lateral shall be sealed to reduce water inflow into the sewer system

A shared private lateral must be tested from the structure to the public sewer main, not to the property line. If you have an existing private sewer lateral shared with your neighbor(s), check local ordinance requirements to find out whether the shared lateral can be preserved or must be separated.

If a structure has an extended foundation in the form of concrete stairs or a concrete retaining wall that extends directly from the foundation, the PSL may be considered to begin at the location the extended foundation ends and the PSL test may then begin at this location. If that segment between the sewer main and the extended foundation is replaced, a 20-year certificate will be issued. Anything less will receive a 7-year certificate. A concrete slab, driveway, wood stairs, wood retaining wall, horizontal projection of roof, carport, awning, deck, balcony, or walkway are not considered extended foundation, and the PSL test will begin at the building foundation wall. For more information, please review the Guidelines for Extended Foundation and Horizontal Projections at [www.eastbaypsl.com/guidelines.html](http://www.eastbaypsl.com/guidelines.html).

**Step 7: Pass Water or Air Verification Test**

A PSL meets the Regional PSL compliance requirements when one of the following criteria is met:

Test Type	Passing Criteria
Hydrostatic (water) Test	There is no observable water level loss in a 5-foot (60 inch) standpipe after 5 minutes.
Low Pressure Air Test	Pressure does not drop more than one psi in 5 minutes (minimum starting pressure is 3.5 psi).

Note: Parcels within the cities of Alameda and Albany are only responsible for the upper sewer lateral. During inspection, contractors must inform the EBMUD inspector of the public sewer main location. If the location is not illustrated on the sewer map, contractors will be asked to provide further documentation of public sewer main location before a Compliance Certificate is issued.

**Step 8: Print or Download Compliance Certificate**

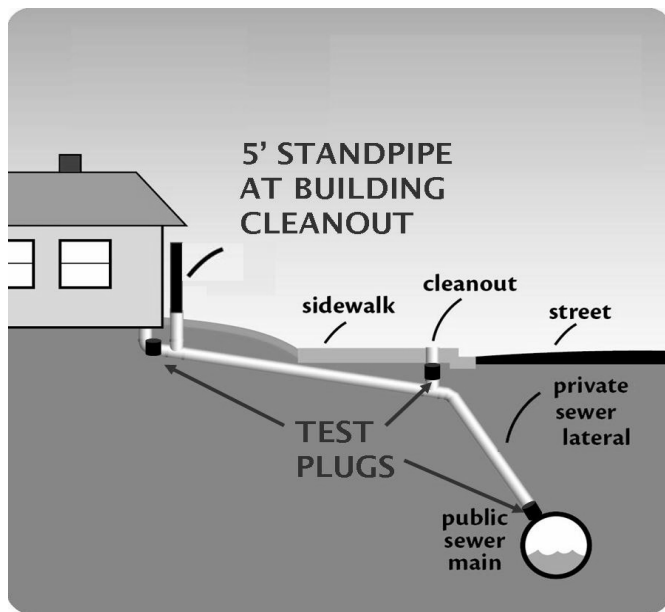
After the PSL passes a water or air verification test, a Compliance Certificate will be available for the property owner to print or download from any computer with internet access at [www.eastbaypsl.com](http://www.eastbaypsl.com). If the City notifies EBMUD that the property is not compliant with the City Ordinance, EBMUD may hold a Compliance Certificate from being issued until the City notifies EBMUD the property is compliant. The PSL may need to be re-tested at the City’s discretion.

## Verification Test Setups

### Hydrostatic Water Test

The contractor shall provide all materials and equipment necessary to conduct the test. The test assembly shall include the following equipment:

- Appropriate pipe test plugs and caps to be used during lateral testing.
- A standpipe that can be connected to the building cleanout riser to allow a pressure head of 5 feet (60 inches) above the **highest point** of the lateral section being tested. The diameter of the standpipe shall be no greater than 4 inches and no less than 2 inches.



### Hydrostatic Water Test Setup

The upper lateral is the portion of the lateral from the building to the cleanout near the curb line, or from the building to the curb line if there is no cleanout near the curb line.

The lower lateral is the portion of the lateral from the cleanout near the curb line to the sewer main, or from the curb line to the sewer main if there is no cleanout near the curb line.

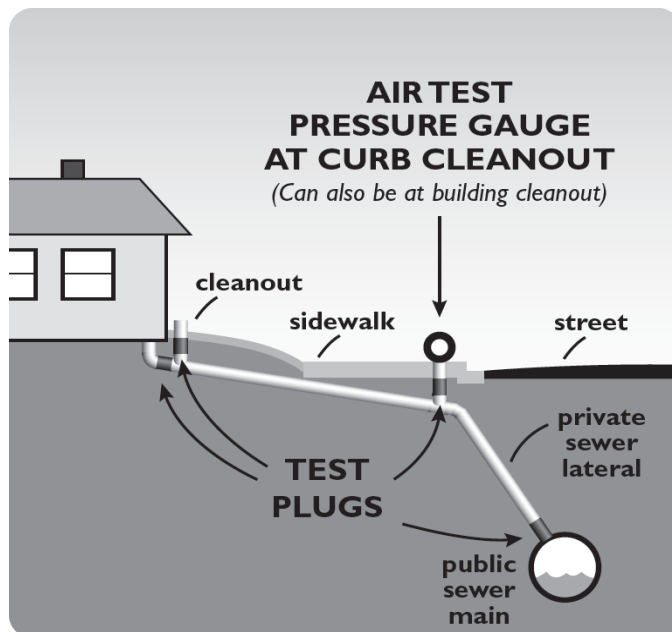
### Testing Procedure

- The entire lateral must be tested, except for parcels in the Cities of Alameda and Albany, which require upper sewer lateral testing only. To test the upper lateral only, plug the sewer lateral immediately downstream of the curb cleanout, if present (i.e., the curb cleanout must be included in the test). If there is no curb cleanout, plug the lateral at the street curb line. To test the full lateral, plug the sewer lateral as close to the building as possible upstream of the cleanout (typically within 2 feet from the building foundation) and immediately upstream of the connection to the sewer main. It is recommended to plug the building cleanout first to prevent sewage from accumulating in the lateral during test set-up. If needed, a wye connection may be installed for the insertion of a testing plug in the lateral just above the joint at the public sewer main (check City requirements.) After the test is complete, the wye should be capped and buried. If there is a curb or property line cleanout present, plug the cleanout riser using an airtight cleanout cover or plug located near the top of the cleanout riser. *Failure to bleed the air out of the cleanout riser while filling the pipe with water may result in a failed test.*
- Install a temporary standpipe at the building cleanout with the open end 5 feet (60 inches) above the highest point of the PSL section being tested.
- Fill the standpipe with water and monitor it for at least 5 minutes or until the water level becomes stable. Add water as needed to maintain 5 feet of head at the top of the standpipe. The water level is stable when there is no observed drop in the water level of the standpipe.
- Begin the test. No water may be added to the standpipe once the test has started.
- After 5 minutes, the contractor will be asked to remove the test assembly for the EBMUD inspector to verify if the test was set up properly. Mark the plug hose at the point it enters the sewer, deflate the plug and remove the plug and hose assembly. The inspector will measure the length from the mark to the end of the plug to ensure the entire lateral was tested.
- If you lose a testing plug to the sewer main, notify the local agency where the work is being performed immediately. A runaway plug may block the sewer system and cause an overflow.
- The lateral passes the test if there is no observable water loss at the top of the 5-foot standpipe after 5 minutes.

## Low Pressure Air Test

The contractor shall provide all materials and equipment necessary to conduct the test. The test assembly shall include the following equipment:

- Appropriate pipe test plugs and caps to be used during lateral testing.
- A test assembly that allows the application of pressurized air to the pipe being tested, provides connections for the air pressure gauge, and includes a 3/8" female pipe thread connection to allow a second pressure test gauge to be connected in parallel to the pressure test gauge.
- An analog (dial) pressure test gauge that is in good working order and has a range of 0 to 5, 0 to 10, or 0 to 15 pounds per square inch (psi) that **in 0.1 psi increments**. If an incorrect gauge is used, it will be a test set up failure, and a rescheduling fee will be assessed for the return inspection. Digital gauges are not accepted.
- A reliable source of pressurized air with a pressure regulator as needed. The pressure regulator can be set to alert field workers of problems when high pressure conditions exceed pre-determined safety levels.



### Low Pressure Air Test Setup

Upper lateral is the portion of the lateral from the building to the cleanout near the curb line, or from the building to the curb line if there is no cleanout near the curb line.

The lower lateral is the portion of the lateral from the cleanout near the curb line to the sewer main, or from the curb line to the sewer main if there is no cleanout near the curb line.

### Testing Procedure

- The entire lateral must be tested, except for parcels in the Cities of Alameda and Albany, which require upper sewer lateral testing only. To test the upper lateral only, plug the sewer lateral immediately downstream of the curb cleanout, if present (i.e., the curb cleanout must be included in the test). If there is no curb cleanout, plug the lateral at the street curb line. To test the full lateral, plug the sewer lateral as close to the building as possible upstream of the cleanout (typically within 2 feet of the building foundation) and immediately upstream of the connection to the sewer main. It is recommended to plug the building cleanout first to prevent sewage from accumulating in the lateral during test set-up. If needed, a wye connection may be installed for the insertion of a testing plug in the lateral just above the joint at the public sewer main (check City requirements). After the test is complete, the wye should be capped and buried. If there is a curb or property line cleanout, plug the cleanout riser using an airtight cleanout cover or plug located near the top of the cleanout riser.

- Apply pressurized air to the test assembly and raise the internal pressure to approximately 4 psi. Pressure may be applied from either end of the lateral.
- Maintain the internal air pressure between 3.5 and 4.0 psi for at least two minutes to allow the air pressure and internal temperature to stabilize. The minimum starting pressure is 3.5 psi.
- Disconnect the pressurized air supply and begin timing the test. No additional air may be added once the test has started.
- After 5 minutes, the contractor will be asked to remove the test assembly for an EBMUD inspector to verify if the test was set up properly. Mark the plug hose at the point it enters the sewer, deflate the plug and remove the plug and hose assembly. The inspector will measure the length from the mark to the end of the plug to ensure the entire lateral was tested.
- If you lose a testing plug to the sewer main, notify the local agency where work is being performed immediately. A runaway plug may block the sewer system and cause overflow.
- The lateral passes the test if the pressure does not drop more than one psi in 5 minutes.

Note: A property owner or their representative may request that EBMUD waive the verification test requirement if the PSL cannot physically be tested in accordance with EBMUD’s verification test procedures. EBMUD may waive or modify the verification test requirement if sufficient evidence is provided to demonstrate that the test cannot be performed *and* the PSL meets ordinance requirements. Waiving the verification test expressly requires PSL Program Manager approval. For more information, go to [www.eastbaypsl.com](http://www.eastbaypsl.com).

## Expectations for Contractor Conduct

Contractors who violate any of the Expectations for Contractor Conduct listed below may be subject to the consequences outlined in the following section (“Consequence of Violating EBMUD PSL Contractor Guidelines”).

1. Contractors are expected to behave professionally, politely, and respectfully towards EBMUD inspectors/staff.
2. District policy prohibits discrimination or harassment on the basis of any Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) protected group status, including but not limited to, race, gender, and age (forty and over).
3. Any threatening, unwelcome, and/or inappropriate language and/or conduct will be taken seriously. Any such conduct by a Contractor that is intimidating, hostile, and/or offensive will result in the immediate end of inspection and prompt reporting of the incident to the Contractor’s management.
  - Threatening conduct includes, but is not limited to: making threats of violence, use of physical force, fighting, or intimidating actions.
  - Unwelcome conduct includes, but is not limited to: unwanted physical contact (touching, patting, brushing up against, hugging, intentionally blocking normal movement), leering, staring, obscene gestures, offensive or abusive content in any form of communication, or any other physical, visual, and/or other conduct of an inappropriate nature.
  - Inappropriate language includes, but is not limited to: epithets, derogatory jokes or comments, slurs (including racial and ethnic slurs), negative stereotyping, sexual innuendoes, suggestive

comments, jokes of a sexual nature, sexual propositions, lewd remarks, requests for any type of sexual favor (this includes repeated, unwelcome requests for dates), and any other verbal abuse and/or unwelcome verbal conduct.

4. Contractors are expected to be accurate and truthful, and to provide complete information in all aspects of this process, including appointment scheduling, evaluating and permanently removing cross-connections, completing lateral repairs, and performing the verification test.
5. Contractors may only schedule appointments if they are the property owner or acting as the property owners' authorized agent. EBMUD may contact property owners to verify.
6. Contractors may only schedule appointments for properties that are reasonably expected to be ready for the inspection to occur. Do not schedule inspections as "placeholders;" this is a violation of EBMUD procedures.
7. Contractors must submit complete and accurate information when scheduling an appointment. In particular, you are required to state the property owner's name and contact information. This has been a requirement since 2019 due to obligations that EBMUD has to certain cities to delay issuing Compliance Certificates at their request. If you do not enter this information, EBMUD may cancel the inspection.
8. Prior to scheduling an inspection, contractors must submit the required form for properties within HOAs, Alameda Point, the Port of Oakland, or with more than one lateral. If these property types are scheduled as a regular appointment online, EBMUD may cancel or refuse to perform the inspection.

## **Consequence of Violating EBMUD PSL Contractor Guidelines**

EBMUD will take action when it determines that a Contractor is not following these guidelines. EBMUD may cancel individual inspections, contact the property owner to verify status, require immediate payment of fees (including the reschedule fee), and, with repeated and/or severe violations, may suspend Contractors' privileges to schedule appointments or place additional requirements on those inspections. EBMUD will manage infractions as follows:

- **First violation:** EBMUD may issue a written warning explaining the violation and the proper procedure to follow.
- **Second violation:** EBMUD may suspend Contractor scheduling privileges for one week.
- **Third violation:** EBMUD may suspend Contractor scheduling privileges for a minimum of four weeks. Prior to having scheduling privileges reinstated, the Contractor will be required to submit a satisfactory written plan demonstrating how they will prevent further violations of EBMUD procedures.
- **Fourth violation:** EBMUD may suspend Contractor scheduling privileges for one year.

Typically, the District will use progressive infractions to correct Contractor violations as outlined above. However, the District reserves the right to implement more severe consequences depending on the nature and severity of the offense, the Contractor's history of work and conduct with the District, and the manner in which the Contractor responds to infractions.

If EBMUD determines that there is a security concern with conducting an inspection, the Contractor will be required to schedule a special appointment at a time that EBMUD is able to arrange for a security escort.



## **PSL Program Contractor List**

As a resource for property owners and a tool for Contractors, EBMUD maintains a list of contractors engaged with the Regional Program. The list is voluntary, and contractors are not required to be on the list to conduct inspections with EBMUD. Contractors that choose to be on the list are required to receive training on PSL Program procedures and to certify that they will maintain compliance with these procedures. To apply, go to [www.ebmud.com/psl](http://www.ebmud.com/psl).

## **Contractor Suspension List**

When EBMUD determines it necessary to suspend a contractor's privilege to schedule and conduct inspections due to violation of EBMUD procedures, EBMUD will make that information available to the public. EBMUD will publish the list of contractors whose privileges have been suspended at [eastbaypsl.com](http://eastbaypsl.com). EBMUD will periodically update the list to indicate when a Contractor has been added and the date on which EBMUD reinstated privileges. EBMUD will remove a contractor from the list once they have remained in good standing for a one-year period. A contractor may request that their privileges be reinstated or that they be removed from the list by submitting an Appeal as described in Section 14 of the PSL Ordinance.

## **Revocation and Modification of Compliance Certificates**

EBMUD may either revoke or modify a Compliance Certificate if the Certificate was issued due to error, omission, fraud, or misrepresentation.