

City of Fitchburg



Department of Public Works

November 20, 2024

COMMISSIONER

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978-345-9887 FAX

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Boston, Massachusetts 02109-3912
Attn: Beth Kudaruskas

Massachusetts D.E.P., CERO
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Attn: David Boyer

STREETS & PARKS

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WASTEWATER

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SEWER COLLECTION

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WATER

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CEMETERIES

115 Mount Elam Road
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Re: SSO and Dry-Weather CSO Compliance Report

Dear Messrs. Handler and Boyer:

In accordance with the City of Fitchburg's Consent Decree, Paragraph 71, this letter is to serve as the 2021 Compliance Report. In this report we are covering the period from February 1, 2022 to January 31, 2023. It includes a list of sanitary sewer overflows (SSO's) and dry-weather combined sewer overflows (CSO's). A map is provided displaying the locations of all events. A list is provided of private property sewer backups that sought City assistance. Finally, a brief explanation will be provided on how the City expects to meet its water quality-based CSO compliance obligations.

List of SSO's

The City experienced eight (8) sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs) in the reporting period that were the result of issues with the municipally owned sewer system. All SSO's were reported to the MassDEP and EPA, and a Sanitary Sewer Overflow (SSO)/Bypass Notification Form was submitted.

Table 1 (attached), and the attached map includes all SSOs. A brief description of each event is as follows:

- 1) **135 Intervale Road, 3/6/22** – The city was notified of a homeowner backing up on Ray Avenue. The City responded and found manholes on Ray Avenue to be surcharged. The City traced the surcharge downstream to a blockage of an 18" diameter sewer on an easement at 135 Intervale Road. The blockage was due to construction damaging a sewer manhole and debris falling into the main sewer. Because of the amount of flow and length of hose required to by-pass, the City hired an on-call contractor to by-pass flow and clear the blockage. Residual spillage seeped into the ground surface.
- 2) **370 Summer Street, 4/28/22** – The City was called out for a backup in the building basement. Video of the main line revealed roots to be the cause. Root treatment was applied to the main line and this location has been added to the City's problem area check list. The basement was cleaned by the owner.

- 3) **115 Swan Avenue, 7/8/22** – The City was called out for a backup in the building basement. Approximately 15 gallons were released into the basement floor. Video of the main line revealed roots to be the cause. Roots were cut out of the main line and root treatment was applied to the main. This location has been added to the City’s problem area check list. The basement was cleaned by the owner.
- 4) **207 Summer Street, 3/1/21**– The City responded to a call about sewerage backing up into a basement. Approximately 80 gallons were released into the basement floor. Upon response, the City jetted the line and relieved a blockage. The blockage appears to have been caused by debris in the pipe. The City’s video of the main line did not show any additional defects. The basement was cleaned by building staff.
- 5) **23 Columbia Avenue, 8/9/22** – The City responded to a call about sewerage overflowing from a manhole. Upon response, the City found the manhole to be surcharged but with any spillage on to the surface evaporated. The City traced the blockage to a sewer manhole located along State Route 2. The City jetted the main line and relieved a blockage caused by debris. Approximately 20 gallons were discharged. Heavy rains in the afternoon washed away any residual spillage.
- 6) **164 Elm Street, 8/9/22**– The City was called to a report of sewer backing up into a building basement. The backup was caused by a heavy afternoon rain event. This property has a history of backups and a backflow prevent was installed but not functioning properly. This situation will be corrected with the “downtown” separation project in the next few years. Approximately 1,222 gallons are estimated to have spilled into the building basement. The basement was professionally cleaned.
- 7) **112 Buttrick Avenue, 9/22/22** – The City responded to a call regarding a backup into a residential basement. The sewer manhole upstream from the home was found to be surcharged. The City jetted the main line and was able to restore partial flow but evidence of broken pipe was found. Excavation revealed that the main line was damaged during work on an adjacent utility. The City repaired the main line. Approximately 5,800 gallons were discharged. The basement was professionally cleaned.
- 8) **Intersection of Goddard Street and Bond Street, 11/17/22** – The City was called to investigate sewerage surcharging from a manhole. The main line was jetted and a blockage was removed. Approximately 2,000 gallons are estimated to have spilled and froze on the roadway. Area was cleaned to the best of our ability. DPW salted and sanded the intersection.

List of Dry-Weather CSO Events

The City experienced no dry weather CSOs in the reporting period that were the result of issues with its municipally owned system.

List of Private Property Backups

The City uses "SeeClickFix" to monitor private property sewer backups. SeeClickFix is a web-based software which allows the City, or constituents to enter and track sewer issues. To date, the system has been well received by both residents and City personnel. Table 3 contains a list from the SeeClickFix system for private homeowner, or non-SSO related issues. Homeowners are responsible for calling a plumber to clear blockages or infrastructure failures within the privately owned sewer service, or within the building plumbing.

Qualifying statement to meet water quality obligations.

In the reporting year, the City neared completion of its Sewer System Evaluation Study, (SSES) Phase IV. Phase IV includes complete multi-sensor inspection of the City's trunk sewer. During the reporting year, the City also hired a contractor to clean five double barrels siphons in the City, 3 of which are on the trunk sewer near the WWTF. Additional heavy cleaning will was also conducted at specific locations of the trunk sewer and large diameter sewers throughout the City. The City also separated 22 combination manholes during the reporting year, and will be separating additional combination manholes in the coming year using a combination of in-house and outside forces.

Within the reporting period, the City began construction of the CSO-7, 11, 39, and 48 Sewer Separation project. In addition to closing four CSO regulators, the City expects to permanently separate approximately 17 combination manholes within this project. The project is started in November 2020, with work continuing throughout the winter months on combination manhole separation and pipe lining.

We will continue to make strong efforts in the next reporting period to improve water quality to the Nashua River.

If you have any questions regarding this compliance report, please contact Fitchburg Civil Engineer, Jeff Hillman, P.E., at 978-829-1916, or the undersigned.

Very Truly Yours,

Mark McNamara
Fitchburg DPW Interim Deputy Commissioner of Wastewater

Attachments

Electronic & Hard Copy: Beth Kudarauskas, USEPA, Region 1 Office

November 20, 2024

City of Fitchburg, Massachusetts 01420

www.fitchburgma.gov

David Boyer, P.E., MassDEP, Central Region Office

Electronic copy:
(Transmittal letter only)

Chief, Environmental Enforcement Section, DOJ
Anu Balakrishna, Assistant U.S. Attorney
Jeff Kopf, Senior Enforcement Counsel, EPA Region 1
Louis Dundin, Assistant Attorney General, Massachusetts AG
Vincent Pusateri, II, Fitchburg City Solicitor

Electronic copy:

Nicholas Erickson, P.E., Fitchburg Commissioner of Public Works
Jeff Hillman, P.E., Fitchburg Civil engineer

"I certify under penalty of law that this document and all attachments were prepared under my direction or supervision in accordance with a system designed to assure that qualified personnel properly gather and evaluate the information submitted. Based on my inquiry of the person or persons who manage the system, or those persons directly responsible for gathering the information, the information submitted is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, true, accurate and complete. I am aware that there are significant penalties for submitting false information, including the possibility of fine and imprisonment for knowing violations."

Mark McNamara.

DPW Interim Deputy Commissioner of Wastewater

Table 1 - SSO Events (February 1, 2022 to January 31, 2022)														
Event	SSO Discovered		SSO Stopped		Discharge From	Discharge To	Receiving Water	Location/Address	Estimated SSO Volume (Gallons)	Estimation Method	Cause of SSO Event	Corrective Actions Taken	Impact Area Disinfected Yes/No	Comments/Follow-up
	Date	Time	Date	Time										
1	6-Mar-22	6:00 PM	7-Mar-22	2:00 PM	Sewer manhole	Catch basin	N. Nashua River	135 Intervale Rd.	50 gpm	Visual	Construction	On-call contractor by-passed main and cleared	Yes	Residual SSO infiltrated ground surface.
2	28-Apr-22	5:00 PM	28-Apr-22	6:00 PM	Backup into	Property	N/A	370 Summer St.	100	Vacuumed by	Blockage/roots	Main line was cleared of roots.	Yes	Root killer will be periodically applied to this sewer main.
3	8-Jul-22	11:00 AM	8-Jul-22	11:00 AM	Backup into	Property	N/A	115 Swan Ave.	15	Visual	Blockage/roots	Main line was cleared of roots.	Yes	Root killer will be periodically applied to this sewer main.
4	27-Jul-22	12:15 PM	27-Jul-22	12:35 PM	Backup into	Property	N/A	207 Summer St.	80	Visual	Blockage	Main line was cleared of debris.	Yes	Camera line to look for additional defects.
5	9-Aug-22	9:00 AM	9-Aug-22	9:00 AM	Sewer manhole	Ground Surface	N/A	23 Columbe Ave	20	Visual	Blockage	Jettied main to clear grease and rags.	No	SSO was evaporated when we arrived at the site. Heavy rain occurred after event clearing surface.
6	9-Aug-22	3:35 PM	9-Aug-22	2:00 PM	Backup into property	Property basement	N/A	164 Elm St.	1,222	Basement Size/Water mark	Rain event	Owner advised to repair backflow preventer and disconnect bar-drain from building sewer.	Yes, cleaning crew was on-site	Area to be separated in the next 2-4 years.
7	29-Sep-22	9:59 AM	29-Sep-22	11:30 AM	Backup into property	Property basement	N/A	112 Buttrick Ave.	5,800	Visual	Broken pipe	Restore flow and repair pipe.	Yes	Gas and Water work in vicinity of break, camera to determine cause.
8	17-Nov-22	8:30 AM	17-Nov-22	9:00 AM	Sewer manhole	Ground surface	N/A	Intersection of Goddard St. and Bond St.	2,000	Visual	Blockage	DPW salted frozen water that resulted. Crew cleaned area.	Yes	Check area periodically/routine maintenance.

Table 3 - Private SSO Events & Service Call Log (February 1, 2022 to January 31, 2023)

Date	Address	Nature of Call	Findings
2/2/2022	859 Rindge Rd	Blockage in lateral	Blockage in lateral at manhole, cleared blocked lateral from manhole. Notified owner to have lateral checked.
2/5/2022	39 Belmont St	Building backup	Jettied from MH down stream for 215ft to see if it cleared, needs plumber.
2/18/2022	334 Chester St	Blockage in lateral	When inspected, lateral and main were flowing. Advised owner to call a plumber
2/19/2022	57 Plymouth St	Building backup	Advised homeowner to call plumber to snake lateral.
2/22/2022	68 Parson Cir	Building backup	Wipes in lateral, advised homeowner on use of wipes and to call plumber to snake.
3/3/2022	Bray Ave	Manhole cover off	Checked all manholes in condo complex, all covers were in place on arrival.
3/3/2022	Elizabeth St	Waterline break	Assisted Water Department with excavation for water repair.
3/21/2022	1 Goodfellow Dr	Building backup	Sewer puddle found, advised homeowner to contact contractor.
3/21/2022	21 Hale St	Blockage in lateral	Checked main on Hale and Lynn St, both running very well. Advised homeowner to repair blockage.
3/23/2022	156 Chester St	Blockage in lateral	Up and downstream MH show main flow as good, advised homeowner to have lateral snaked.
3/31/2022	64 Nashua St	Building backup	Owner snaked lateral and found roots from recent construction. Root treatment was applied.
4/5/2022	Frankfort St	Sewer odor	SMH was vacuumed and jettied. Odor likely from industrial process in west Fitchburg.
4/6/2022	Oak Hill Country Club - Franklin Rd.	Backup on to grass/stormwater issue	No sewer in vicinity, alerted Gary of storm water issue.
4/11/2022	59 Loiselle Ave	Blockage in lateral	Advised homeowner to repair, vacuumed out MH and flushed from cleanout.
4/11/2022	Cushing @ Boulder Dr	Water puddling	Residual water from sprinkler flushing.
4/13/2022	1303 Main St	Building backup	Advised homeowner of private issue.
4/13/2022	472 Westminster Hill Rd	Building backup	Lateral was damaged during construction, repair made.
4/21/2022	27 Burnap St	Building backup	Advised homeowner to call plumber to snake lateral.
4/25/2022	Boyalston St	MH surcharge	Vacuumed out MH, flow returned.
4/29/2022	8 Otis St	Slow sewerline	Checked main line, flowing normal. Advised owner to call a plumber.
5/2/2022	102 Leighton St	MH overflow	Private property, homeowner advised to call plumber.
5/10/2022	283 Main St	Hoses stuck in pipe	Main line running well, called 283 Main St to notify, private issue
5/11/2022	82 Boutelle St	Building backup	Advised homeowner to have lateral snaked. Homeowner issue
5/17/2022	23 Woodworth St	Building backup	Advised homeowner to have lateral snaked. Homeowner issue
5/23/2022	Klondike @ Webster	MH surcharge	Jettied from MH down stream for 250ft, returned to normal flow. No overflow to surface.
5/18/2022	Drury Lane	Milky water in Birch Brook	Runoff from construction, not sewer related.
5/28/2022	444 Franklin Rd	Building backup	Checked main line, flowing normal. Advised owner to call a plumber.
6/6/2022	147 Parson Cir	Rag build-up in MH	Jettied and cleared lines. Homeowner issue
6/6/2022	17 Wilson St	Building backup	Checked main line, flowing normal. Advised owner to call a plumber.
6/13/2022	76 Richardson Rd	MH overflow	Advised homeowner of responsibility and possible solutions.
6/24/2022	266 Beech St	Building backup	Advised homeowner to have lateral snaked. Homeowner issue
6/24/2022	217 St. Joseph's St	Building backup	Advised homeowner to have lateral snaked. Homeowner issue
6/24/2022	19 Upton St	Building backup	Main blocked, jettied from downstream MH. Private issue.
7/7/2022	93 Culley St	Building backup	Advised homeowner to have lateral snaked. Homeowner issue
7/7/2022	318 Wanoosnoc Rd	Sewer odor	Checked up and downstream MH's, no surcharges or odor.
7/9/2022	93 Culley St	Building backup	Jettied from downstream, advised homeowner to call plumber.
7/11/2022	43 Payson St	Building backup	Main was okay, jettied line as a precaution, notified owner of private issue.
7/11/2022	59 Louisa St	Building backup	Plumber snaked 100ft, told homeowner they needed to return for remaining 30ft.
7/12/2022	90 Mechanic St	Building backup	Checked main flow, advised homeowner to call plumber.
7/16/2022	30 Glen Ave	Building backup	Pump needs repair by homeowner, advised to call plumber.
7/26/2022	164 Cathy St	Building backup	Jettied lateral, needs repair, advised homeowner to contact contractor.
7/27/2022	207 Summer St	Building backup	Jettied from Summer St up Matthew St to clear blockage.
8/27/2022	Wallace Ave	Manhole cover off	Put MH cover back on
8/28/2022	89 Patton St	Building backup	Jettied from Abbot Ave to Patton St to remove blockage
8/31/2022	224 Rollstone St	Building backup	Jettied main line to clear block.
9/10/2022	90 Payson St	Building backup	Jettied main line as a precaution. Advised homeowner to have lateral snaked
9/19/2022	110 Pratt St. Rear	Building backup	Camera of lateral revealed roots near building foundation. Notified homeowner of private issue

[illegible]