

City of  
**Fitchburg**



Department of  
**Public Works**

**COMMISSIONER**

301 Broad Street  
978-829-1910  
978-345-9687 FAX

**STREETS & PARKS**

301 Broad Street  
978-829-1900  
978-345-9687 FAX

**WASTEWATER**

166 Boulder Drive, Suite 108  
978-345-9622  
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**SEWER COLLECTION**

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**WATER**

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**CEMETERIES**

115 Mount Elm Road  
978-345-9578  
978-345-9686 FAX

February 26, 2024

U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 1  
5 Post Office Square, Suite 100  
Mail code OES04-04  
Boston, Massachusetts 02109-3912  
Attn: Beth Kudarauskas

Massachusetts D.E.P., CERO  
8 New Bond Street  
Worcester, MA 01606  
Attn: Dan Kurpaska

Re: SSO and Dry-Weather CSO Compliance Report

Dear Messrs. Kudarauskas and Kurpaska:

In accordance with the City of Fitchburg's Consent Decree, Paragraph 71, this letter is to serve as the 2023 Compliance Report. In this report we are covering the period from February 1, 2023 to January 31, 2024. 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 nine (9) 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) **391 Elm Street, 3/13/23** - The city was notified of a sewer manhole surcharging near 391 Elm Street. The City discovered the cause of the overflow to be a blockage in the downstream sewer main. The blockage was likely due to an obstruction in the main sewer which entered through a catch basin. This area is slated to be separated in the next 1 - 3 years.
- 2) **329 Pearl Hill Road, 6/10/23** - The City was called out for a sewer manhole overflowing into Pearl Hill Road. The City discovered that the main line was blocked downstream of the overflow. The City jetted and cut roots from the sewer main which cleared the blockage and returned normal flow. Root treatment was applied to the main line and this location has been added to the City's problem area check list. A visual estimate of 30,000 gallons overflowed during this event.

- 3) **100 Pearl Hill Road, 6/11/23** – The City was called out to 100 Pearl Hill Road for an overflowing manhole. The City discovered that the main line was blocked downstream of the overflow. The City jetted and cut roots from the sewer main which cleared the blockage and returned normal flow. Root treatment was applied to the main line and this location has been added to the City's problem area check list. A visual estimate of 6,000 gallons overflowed during this event.
- 4) **881 Main Street, 7/16/23** – The morning after a heavy rain event the City responded to a call regarding a sewer manhole slightly moved off its frame. Upon response, the City found that flows had returned to normal and that this was the CSO 032 regulator manhole. The crew replaced the cover and notified the Sewer System Manager who reported this as an SSO. It is estimated that around 5,000 gallons overflowed. Heavy rain washed away all residual materials from the event. This area is slated to be separated in the next 2 – 4 years.
- 5) **400 Summer Street, 7/16/23** – The City was not notified about this event until late September of 2023. This backup occurred during heavy rains inundating the sewer system. From a depth estimate by the owner and measurements of the basement a volume of 7,000 gallons was calculated to have entered the basement. The owner hired a professional company to clean the basement.
- 6) **120 Edlee Street, 7/20/23** – The City was called to a report of sewer backing up into a building basement. The City crew checked the main line and witnessed slower than average flows. The City ran the jetter/ root cutter in the main line and pulling back roots and clearing the blockage. From the basement dimensions and watermark we calculated about 300 gallons spilled into the basement. This location was added to our root treatment list.
- 7) **101 Fitchburg Road, Westminster, MA, 7/27/23** – The City responded to a call regarding brown water spilling on to Fitchburg Road, (Route 31) in Westminster. The City determined that a sewer force main which transfers leachate from the City's landfill was compromised. The City contacted personnel from Waste Management at the landfill and had them shutdown their pumps so repairs could be made. The City hired an outside contractor due to the landfill's limitations on storage time and the potential need of bypassing over 2,000 feet of force main. Excavation revealed that the main line was somehow damaged then subsequently repaired improperly. National Grid was also called in to support a utility pole adjacent to the line repair during excavation. Approximately 40,000 gallons were discharged during the initial event. Further potential discharges were prevented by timing pump operation in conjunction with repairs. This area is now being monitored more closely by Fitchburg and Westminster DPW.
- 8) **Behind 200 Heywood Street, Birch Brook Sewer Easement, 10/30/23** – The City was called to investigate sewerage odor coming from Birch Brook. The City witnessed a gray color to the brook along with an odor of sewer. The City crew traced the source of pollution upstream to a sewer manhole located within the brook. The wall of the manhole had a 1.5' diameter hole in the side wall and sewage was flowing from the manhole directly into the brook. An outside contractor was hired to make repairs to the manhole and sewer main. This decision was made due to potential bypass distance and accessibility to the sewer easement. Approximately 4,590,000 gallons are estimated to have spilled into the brook before repairs were made. The brook and area was cleaned to the best of our ability. To prevent future issues of this magnitude the City plans to install 1,400 feet of structural liner within the Birch Brook Easement.
- 9) **94 Summer Street, 1/31/24** – The City received a call regarding a manhole leaking water on to Summer Street. The City jetted the main line from the downstream manhole and was able to clear a

blockage of grease and debris within the line. A large amount of grease was also witnessed in the upstream manhole once it was drained. The maintenance person at 94 Summer Street and the Fitchburg Health Department were notified regarding grease trap maintenance to prevent future issues such as this. We estimated approximately 200 gallons of sewage spilled from the manhole onto the roadway surface. The City was in the process of snow and ice removal during this event so no evidence of the spill was visually noticeable.

#### **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.**

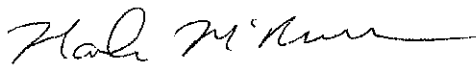
In the reporting year, the City neared completion of its Sewer System Evaluation Study, (SSES) Phase IV. Phase IV includes complete multi-sensor inspection of the City's trunk sewer. During the reporting year, the City also hired a contractor to clean five double barrels siphons in the City, 3 of which 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 3 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 has continued construction of the CSO 010, 032, 045, 083 Sewer Separation/Rehabilitation Project. In addition to closing four CSO regulators, the City expects to permanently separate approximately 10 combination manholes within this project.

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 the Sewer System Manager, Kenneth DuPont, at 978-829-1906, or the undersigned.

Very Truly Yours,



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Mark McNamara

Fitchburg DPW Interim Deputy Commissioner of Wastewater

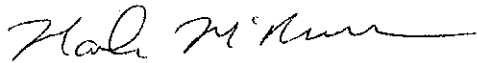
Attachments

Electronic & Hard Copy: Beth Kudarauskas, USEPA, Region 1 Office  
Dan Kurpaska, MassDEP, Central Region Office

Electronic copy: Chief, Environmental Enforcement Section, DOJ  
(Transmittal letter only) Anu Balakrishna, Assistant U.S. Attorney  
Jeff Kopf, Senior Enforcement Counsel, EPA Region 1  
Louis Dundin, Assistant Attorney General, Massachusetts AG

Electronic copy: Nicholas Erickson, P.E., Fitchburg Commissioner of Public Works

"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."



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Mark McNamara.  
DPW Interim Deputy Commissioner of Wastewater

Event	SSO Recovered	SSO Shopped	Discharge From	Discharge To	Receiving Water	Location/Address	Estimated SSO Volume (gallons)	Estimation Method	Cause of SSO Event	Corrective Actions Taken	Injured Area Disinfected	Comments/Follow-up
Date	Time	Date	Time								Yes/No	
1	13-Mar-23	1:00 PM	13-Mar-23	2:30 PM	Sewer manhole	N. Nashua River	4,500	Visual	Blockage	Jetted main to clear blockage	No	Residuals from SSO were washed away by rain.
2	10-Jun-23	5:00 PM	10-Jun-23	9:30 PM	Sewer manhole	Faulkth Brook	30,000	Visual	Blockage/roots	Main line was jetted and roots were cleared.	Yes	Root killer will be periodically applied to this sewer main.
3	11-Jun-23	4:00 PM	11-Jun-23	5:30 PM	Sewer manhole	Faulkth Brook	6,000	Visual	Blockage/roots	Main line was jetted and cleared of roots	Yes	Root killer will be periodically applied to this sewer main.
4	16-Jul-23	9:30 AM	16-Jul-23	9:35 AM	Sewer manhole	Punch Brook	5,000	Visual	Rain event	Flows returned to normal after rain event.	Yes	Area to be separated in the next 2-4 years.
5	16-Jul-23	12:00 PM	16-Jul-23	1:00 PM	Backup into property	N/A	7,000	Assessment Size Calc.	Rain event	Flows returned to normal after rain event.	Yes, cleaning company hired	We were not notified until 9/21/23.
6	20-Jul-23	11:30 AM	20-Jul-23	12:00 PM	Backup into property	N/A	300	Assessment Size Calc.	Blockage/roots	Jetted main and cleared roots	Yes	We added the area to our root treatment list.
7	27-Jul-23	9:00 AM	27-Jul-23	11:00 AM	Broken Force Main	N/A	40,000	Visual	Poor repair	Repaired force main with proper construction methods.	No, heavy rains washed area	Monitor area more closely moving forward.
8	30-Oct-23	8:30 AM	2-Nov-23	1:00 PM	Sewer manhole	48th Brook	4,500,000	Visual	Broken manhole wall.	Replaced manhole and made a spot repair to main line.	Yes	Because of access issues we will be lining this section of the assessment, approximately 1,400 feet.
9	31-Jan-24	9:00 AM	31-Jan-24	9:30 AM	Sewer manhole	N/A	200	Visual	Blockage/grease	Jetted main to clear blockage of grease and debris. Cleaned manhole of grease.	Yes	Monitor manhole to check for grease build up. Notified Health Dept regarding grease traps.

**Table 3 - Private SSO Events & Service Call Log (February 1, 2023 to January 31, 2024)**

Date	Address	Nature of Call	Findings
2/3/2023	86-88 Mount Vernon Rd.	Sewer back-up	Flow in main line was normal, checked manholes and they were fine. Advised homeowner to use root killer.
2/5/2023	36 Rockland St.	Sewer back-up	Flow looked okay, jetted line. Advised h.o. to call plumber if problem persists.
2/6/2023	44-46 Pleasant View Ave.	Sewer back-up	Snaked lateral to main line. Lateral has hole, h.o. is aware and needs to repair.
2/16/2023	40 Westminster Hill Rd.	Sewer back-up	Line was broken due to repair. Jetted line to relieve blockage. Line scheduled to be replaced in upcoming project.
3/4/2023	233 Cedar St.	Manhole has metal coming out of it	Manhole was hit by a plow and a strip of metal was coming out of it. Barrel was put over manhole.
3/13/2023	536 Pearl St.	Sewer backup	Jetted main 300ft, running fine.
4/12/2023	1105 Water St.	Sewer backup	Rags were pushed into main line when lateral was snaked by h.o., jetted main line.
4/14/2023	24 Forest Hill Rd.	Questions regarding service repair	Explained that repair was their responsibility, referred to use contractor.
4/14/2023	7 Alice Ave.	Sewer backup	Jetted main to clean debris from h.o. rooter-man.
4/22/2023	1105 Water St.	Line running slow	Jetted main line.
4/22/2023	38-39 Elizabeth St.	Line running slow	Checked flow, running fine.
4/23/2023	104 Kyslak St.	Line running slow	Grit was found, jetted line, then confirmed clear with camera.
5/3/2023	822 Shea St.	Line running slow	Checked lateral tie-in and main, was all clear. Advised homeowner to contact plumber.
5/13/2023	184 Townsend St.	Sewer backup	Jetted main, civil matter between 1105 and 1115 needs to be solved.
5/19/2023	1105 Water St.	Sewer backup	Checked main, was flowing okay
6/8/2023	72 Pratt St.	Sewer backup	Put cover back on
6/14/2023	Drepanos St.	Manhole cover off	Checked main, was flowing okay, advise owner to call a plumber
6/29/2023	15 Worcester St.	Sewer backup	Manhole was already put back on when we arrived
6/30/2023	Ashburnham Hill Rd. at West St.	Manhole cover off	Manhole was already put back on when we arrived
7/16/2023	Pierce Farm Rd.	Manhole cover off	Checked main line. Everything appeared normal. Told owner to hire a plumber.
7/16/2023	120 Edlee St.	Sewer backup	Pump 1 was not running. Manually pumped down with other pumps. Called for service.
7/18/2023	65 Sawyer Passway	High Tide Alarm at Pump Station	Checked all streets, no covers found to be off.
7/18/2023	Elm St. and multiple locations in the area	Manhole cover off	Heavy rains produced runoff that flooded the parking area.
7/19/2023	1 Oak Hill Rd.	Stormwater flooding parking area.	This was due to heavy rains. We should look at upsizing this drain due to capacity issues.
7/19/2023	87 Theresa St.	Stormwater backing up into the house	Checked main line. Everything appeared normal. Told owner to hire a plumber and service pump.
7/19/2023	473 Fairmount St.	Sewer backup	Flow was normal in up and downstream manholes. Jetted main line as a precautionary measure.
7/23/2023	141 Olin Ave.	Sewer backup	Ground water issue. Water rises out of cleanout sump area.
7/24/2023	199 South St.	Water in basement	Jetted main line and vacuumed manholes as a precaution.
7/24/2023	47 Belair Dr.	Sewer backup	Water Dept. was on site and repairing a broken water main.
7/30/2023	218 East St.	Surcharging manhole	Put cover back on
8/15/2023	Buma Rd. Easement	Manhole cover off	Checked main line, flow was normal. Notified owner to hire plumber.
8/16/2023	197 Pratt Rd.	Sewer backup	No missing cover found. Checked surrounding area as well.
9/10/2023	Nichols St.	Manhole cover off	No missing cover found. Checked surrounding area as well.
9/11/2023	Nichols St.	Manhole cover off	Checked main line. Advised owner to call a plumber.
9/14/2023	93 Fitch Hill Rd.	Sewer backup	Sewer flowing normal on our end. Advised owner of responsibility.
9/15/2023	54 Melrose St.	Sewer running slow/Sewer odor	Checked main line and dye tested to determine tie in. Advised owner to call a plumber.
9/25/2023	115 Swan Ave.	Sewer backup	Advised owner to put in a claim with Unifi.
10/9/2023	111 Mt. Carmel St.	Sewer lateral damage located by plumber	Main line running normally but jetted anyway. Owner issue, needs to call a plumber.
10/20/2023	357 South St.	Sewer backup	Connects directly to manhole. Jetted lateral carefully and unblocked it.
10/25/2023	563 Westminster Hill Rd.	Sewer backup	Jetted main line from downstream manhole to 50' beyond house. Plumber was on site and will snake lateral.
11/3/2023	117 Arlington St.	Sewer backup	Plumber was on site and fixed issue while we were there.
11/9/2023	470 Blossom St.	Sewer backup	3 homes are connected to a problematic private line with no upstream access. Looking at adding an upstream manhole.
11/27/2023	110 Pratt Extension	Sewer backup	Owner issue. Vacuumed access on lateral and added root killer. Owner to call in rooter service.
12/18/2023	62 Belmont St.	Sewer backup	Owner issue. Owner has hired a plumber to try and clear blocked lateral. May require digging on private property.
12/19/2023	217 Mechanic St.	Sewer backup	Checked flow on Oxford St. and Essex St., everything flowing normally. Advised owner to call a plumber.
12/19/2023	7 Orange St.	Sewer backup	Main line had good flow. Advised owner to have the plumber return and re-snake the lateral.
1/7/2024	54 Bernadette St.	Sewer backup	Checked main lines, all flowing normal. Advised owner to call a plumber.
1/7/2024	39 Oxford St.	Sewer backup	Checked main lines, all flowing normal. Advised owner to call a plumber. Pump system in the basement for some reason.
1/18/2024	20 Orchard St.	Sewer backup	
1/22/2024	187 Electric Ave.	Sewer backup	
1/31/2024	169 Canton St.	Sewer backup	

