

Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania, Inc. Sewer Line Safety Program FAQs

1. What is the sewer line safety program?

As Columbia continues with its enhanced focus on pipeline safety, the Company identified the need for a sewer line safety program to isolate and correct cross-bore situations. Columbia and its contractor will partner with local municipalities to inspect the sewer lines (main and storm) and take any necessary action.

2. What is a cross-bore?

Many utilities use trenchless technology to install underground lines. Trenchless technology basically consists of construction methodologies such as directional boring, moling, horizontal auger boring and other methods for the installation of pipelines and cables below the ground with minimal excavation. This proven construction practice provides an alternative to open trenching and helps reduce road closures, minimizes restoration costs and allows for safe and efficient utility construction in established neighborhoods or urban areas.

Prior to any construction, utilities and contractors are required to call 811 and request the marking of utility lines in the area. Sewer lines are sometimes not marked or not marked correctly, leaving the potential for natural gas lines to be bored through the sewer lines ("cross-bore"). A cross-bore can go undetected for months or even years. Eventually, if a sewer backup develops, a plumber is called to remove the blockage. Plumbers often use a mechanical rotary device to remove a blockage from a clogged sewer line. This practice can damage the utility line and create an unsafe situation allowing natural gas to migrate into homes and buildings.

3. What is the sewer camera inspection process?

A robot with a camera mounted on top will be inserted into the sewer line and will drive up the sewer to visually confirm that there is no intersection between the gas line and the sewer line. The camera can be directed down lateral sewer lines to verify the same safety standards.

This non-invasive video inspection process will not cause any interruption to service and, except in limited instances, will not require any access to home or property. It is physically impossible for the camera to go under a house or into a house.

Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania is committed to providing safe, reliable and efficient natural gas service to more than 442,000 customers in Pennsylvania.

Columbia is dedicated to its customers and communities and is investing to ensure continued public safety and reliable service.

Columbia is being proactive in improving its system with a new sewer line safety program – and it's the right thing to do.

4. Will traffic be affected?

Columbia and its contractor will make every effort to minimize the impact for residents. Traffic cones and flaggers will be on site where necessary to direct traffic around work areas. Driveways will not be blocked by the inspection equipment.

5. How long will the inspection take?

The length of a project will vary based on the length of the sewer lines and the number of laterals.

6. When will the inspection take place?

Monday through Friday, 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

7. Will Columbia and its contractors have identification?

All Columbia personnel and contractors will have photo identification badges that identify them as Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania employees or contractors on site for Columbia. You are welcome to ask to see this identification.