



MONTANA MUNICIPAL INTERLOCAL AUTHORITY

PO Box 6669

Helena MT 59604-6669

RISK MANAGEMENT BULLETIN

Please distribute to all appropriate personnel and post in a conspicuous place.

Date: 5/23/2023

RM Bulletin #04-23

To: MMIA Member-Owners

From: MMIA

RE: Using Contractors for Sewer Line Service

Best Practices when using Contractors for Sewer Line Service

Montana population growth has been extensive in most of our communities over the past several years. With this growth comes increased construction for both new residential and commercial developments, and the associated needs for new streets and utility services. As of late, the increased construction has stretched member resources thin in areas of personnel, equipment, and time. Employees are still hard to find, extra equipment funds are not always available, and time is very definitive. These challenges have required some members to seek assistance from contractors. Partnering with contractors may help meet project deadlines and gain access to specialty services to accomplish project goals.

However, it is critical that the contractors use the same standard of care for the services and the associated documentation of the work performed that our members would use. MMIA has seen an influx of claims where members are utilizing contractors to perform the sewer line servicing and maintenance duties and receiving little to no information of the work performed to accompany the invoice. Without this critical documentation it is difficult to defend our members against sewer backup claims.

It is important to know what portions of the sewer system have been serviced, how it was serviced, what was discovered in the lines, and how it will impact future service needs. Recordkeeping documentation is just as important as the work performed! To better assist the membership in managing contracted services, MMIA has listed best practices below. Following these best practices will help keep track of the work contractors are performing and what you are paying for.

Know Where Your Dough Goes!

Best Practices:

1. Include the following requirements as part of the request for proposal:
 - a. Require the contractor to follow the city/town's service and maintenance plan(s).
 - b. Require the contractor to follow the city/town's response plan for reported issues.
 - c. Require details of the work that was performed each day.
 - d. Require details on the specific location(s) the work was performed.
 - e. Require documentation noting what lines, streets, manholes, lift stations, etc. were serviced.
 - f. Require details of any substandard conditions found.

This bulletin is published as a service to our member-owners. The bulletins are not a substitute for the Memorandum of Liability, Property or Workers' Compensation coverage or other coverage documents. All coverage determinations are made on a case-by-case basis and can only be viewed on the unique facts of the claim presented.



MONTANA MUNICIPAL INTERLOCAL AUTHORITY

PO Box 6669

Helena MT 59604-6669

RISK MANAGEMENT BULLETIN

Please distribute to all appropriate personnel and post in a conspicuous place.

- g. Require details of any objects found in the lines that were serviced.
 - h. Require video copies of surveyed lines where a camera was used.
 - i. Require written details for any follow-up work to be done.
 - j. Require record of findings from the work performed.
2. Provide the contractor(s) with the city/town's service, maintenance, and response plans.
3. Make sure contracts and agreements are in place prior to the contractor beginning the work.
4. Consider making your internal service, call out, and maintenance forms available to contractors in order to make sure documentation standards are consistent with what your employees use.
5. **Refrain from servicing or troubleshooting private service lines.**