



Water and Sewer Easements: Maintenance Responsibilities

Easements may look like cleared paths that lead to nowhere, but they grant the Utilities Department the right to access, maintain, repair or replace a town asset, such as a water or sewer main.

Utility easements are normally a minimum of:

- 20 feet wide for a single utility pipeline.
- 30 feet wide for pipes deeper than 16 feet.
- 10 feet on either side of a pipe for multiple pipes.

Easements are documented to reserve property for a specific use, such as maintaining the town's water and sewer system. They do not remove property from an owner, but they must be kept clear of any plantings or structures. Because plantings can limit accessibility and because their roots can damage water and sewer pipes, the town is unable to plant or maintain any trees or bushes within easements.



Customer responsibilities

Owners of land containing easements must be aware of these areas before building or planting as the town will not replace any plants, fences, sheds, fountains, patios, decks or other structures that impede access to the easement and maintenance of the infrastructure.

For water and sewer features in road rights of way, customers must maintain sufficient clearance to allow access, operation and maintenance of the assets by the town. The following clearance requirements are measured from the center point (radius) of the device:

- Fire hydrants: 3 feet
- Manholes and concrete vaults: 6 feet.
- Water meters, valve boxes, sewer cleanouts, and other utilities apparatus not listed: 2 feet.

Using their own maintenance schedule, customers are responsible for the upkeep, such as mowing, of their property where easements are located and within the road right of way.

Town responsibilities

The town is responsible for maintaining water and sewer easements by clearing brush and undergrowth from the areas at least once per year. This includes clearing trees and bushes to keep the easements accessible for routine maintenance and emergency response.

The town also is responsible for any repairs to property damaged by heavy equipment used in the clearing.

More information

Additional information on technical specifications for utilities and for sanitary sewer use can be found in the [Hillsborough Code of Ordinances](#), chapters 14 and 15.

For more information, contact the Water Distribution and Wastewater Collection Division at 919-296-9650.