

Mandatory Sewer Connections

BACKGROUND:

The Mandatory Sewer Connection requirement and corresponding charges were first written into the Fresno Municipal Code in 1955. Since its inception, the City of Fresno has offered an option for property owners to defer payment of the sewer connection fees, along with interest on the balance of the fees, over a period of time, in an effort to make the cost of connecting more manageable for property owners.

The requirements have changed somewhat over time, but the intent of the Mandatory Sewer Connection requirement, and the corresponding deferral of fees, still remains:

All properties within the City of Fresno's service area shall be connected to the City's sanitary sewer system, and all septic/cesspool systems shall be abandoned, in order to avoid adverse environmental and public health and safety impacts due to nitrates leaching from septic tanks and cesspool systems into the groundwater.

In 2011, in order to further assist property owners with the costs of connecting to the City's sanitary sewer system, the Fresno City Council approved a low-interest loan option for single family residential property owners to include the costs of onsite plumbing to complete the sewer connection, as well as the costs of abandoning the onsite septic tank or cesspool system.

REQUIREMENTS:

Every building or structure in which plumbing fixtures are installed, and every premises having piping thereon, which conveys sewage or other liquid wastes to an approved point of disposal, shall be connected to the regional sewer system, if it is available.

The regional sewer system is available if a sewer main has been constructed and is available for use in any public street, alley or right-of-way within 100 feet for the first unit plus 50 feet for each additional unit, to be measured along such public street, alley or right-of-way from the nearest property to the sewer main.

Generally, buildings or structures connected to a septic tank or cesspool at the time the regional sewer system becomes available shall be connected to the regional sewer system **within three years** after the regional sewer system becomes available.

EXCEPTIONS TO MANDATORY REQUIREMENT TO CONNECT:

A mandatory sewer connection may be deferred until the use of the land changes, either through district amendment or special permit, if a property meets both of the following conditions:

- 1) The lot must be at least two net acres in size;

AND

- 2) The lot, if not served by a community water system, contains one dwelling unit or septic system per 2.0 acres.

PROCESS OF CONNECTION:

The following steps must be completed in order to properly connect a property to the City's sanitary sewer system:

- 1) **Pay connection fees.** (*Public Works Engineering*)
To obtain a cost estimate of the connection fees and charges, contact Frank Saburit at (559) 621-8797 or Frank.Saburit@fresno.gov.
- 2) **Obtain appropriate permits.** (*Planning & Development*)
Information about building permits can be found on the [Planning & Development – Building & Safety](#) web page or by calling (559) 621-8084 or (559) 621-8082.
- 3) **Complete the work** to connect to the sewer system and abandon the septic tank or cesspool system.
- 4) **Obtain final inspection approval** for the permit. (*Planning & Development*)
Contact Inspection Services at (559) 621-8116 to schedule an inspection.
- 5) **Sign up for sewer service billing.** (*Utilities Billing & Collection*)
Contact Utilities Billing & Collection at (559) 621-6888 or fill out the [online](#) form.

IMPORTANT NOTE: *It is the customer's responsibility to ensure that Utilities Billing & Collection (UB&C) is notified of the final inspection approval. If UB&C is not notified upon final inspection and later learns of the completed connection to the sanitary sewer system, the customer will be back billed to the date of final inspection, up to a maximum of 3 years.*

- 6) **Begin service billing for the property.**
Customers will be billed monthly for sewer service.

LOW-INTEREST FINANCING OPTIONS AVAILABLE:

In 2011, in order to further assist property owners with the costs of connecting to the City's sanitary sewer system, the Fresno City Council approved a low-interest loan option for single family residential property owners to include the costs of onsite plumbing to complete the sewer connection, as well as the costs of abandoning the onsite septic tank or cesspool system.

Payment of sewer connection fees, together with interest on the unpaid balance, payable because of connection of existing single-family residences anywhere in the City's service area, and commercial or industrial development in the former Enterprise Zone, may be deferred by an agreement between the property owner and the City, to pay such fees over a period of not more than 15 years (Sewer Connection Agreement, SCA). – FMC § 6-305 (c)

The City also offers a low-interest loan option for single family residential property owners to pay the costs of the onsite plumbing necessary, including the costs of onsite plumbing to complete the sewer connection as well as the costs of abandoning the onsite septic tank or cesspool system, up to a maximum loan amount of \$15,000, over a period of not more than 20 years (Septic Abandonment Loan, SLP). – FMC §6-305 (f)

For additional information about the loan programs, contact the City of Fresno 311 Center by dialing 3-1-1 within City limits or by calling (559) 621-CITY (2489),

REFERENCE:

Fresno Municipal Code, Section 6-303: Sewer Connection Required

Fresno Municipal Code, Section 6-304: Permit Required and Payment of Sewer Connection Charges

Fresno Municipal Code, Section 6-305: Payment of Sewer Charges and Loans

City of Fresno Ordinance No. 2016-52: An Ordinance of the City of Fresno, California, Amending the Fresno Municipal Code Relating to Payment of Sewer Charges and Loans.

City of Fresno Resolution No. 2016-248: A Resolution of the Council of the City of Fresno, California, Amending Exhibit "A", Loan Program Terms and Conditions, of Resolution 2011-147 Establishing a Loan Program for Abandonment of Single Family Residential Septic Tank and Cesspool Systems and Sewer Line Installation and Connection to the City Sewer System.

City of Fresno Resolution No. 2016-248, Exhibit "A"

City of Fresno Master Fee Schedule