

# Sewer Blockage?



**Proceed  
with  
Caution!**

Important Safety Information for  
**Plumbers, Homeowners and  
Sewer and Drain Cleaners**  
About Cross Bores

**EVERSOURCE**

# Be Alert!

Some sewer blockages could be a cross bore and present danger.

## If you have a sewer blockage and backup it could be a cross bore

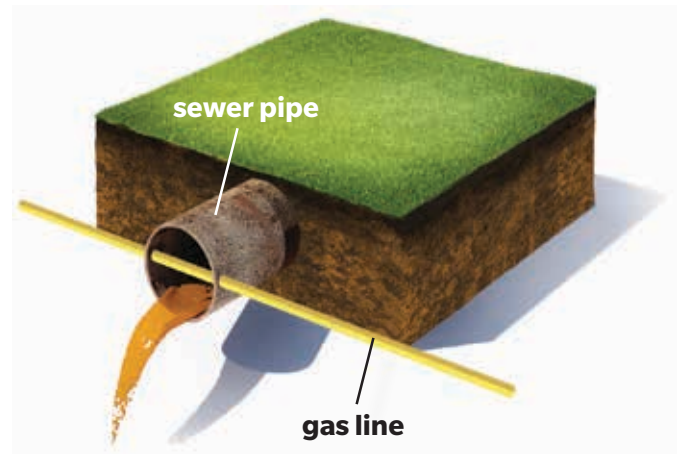
A clogged sewer line may be the result of a cross bore with a natural gas line. Plumbers, sewer cleaners and drain cleaners should take special precautions before performing any sewer line cleaning or maintenance. It is recommended to use a camera to assess the cause of the blockage and to clear the sewer using a plumbing snake or water jet rather than a cutting tool.

## Why cross bores are a safety concern?

Many utilities use “trenchless technology” during construction to install underground lines. Through trenchless technology, underground lines are installed to avoid damage to streets, sidewalks, driveways and landscapes. This technology greatly reduces the cost to restore property to its pre-existing condition. With trenchless digging, sometimes an underground utility line can inadvertently be installed through an existing utility underground structure such as a sewer line.

Gas lines can intersect with sewer lines, which can cause “cross bores”.

The presence of a utility line within a sewer line, commonly referred to as a cross bore, can go unnoticed for months or even years. If a gas line goes through a sewer line, it can obstruct the flow of waste and may eventually lead to a blockage or backup. Eventually, a sewer backup could develop and the next step is to remove the blockage.



A mechanical rotary device is commonly used to remove a blockage. This process almost always damages the utility line that had been bored through the sewer line. If an electric line is cut, you could be at risk of electrocution. If a gas line is damaged, gas could migrate through the sewer lines into homes and buildings and could result in a major incident/event that may involve death, injury and significant property damage.

## Be Aware!

Things you can see and do to maintain a safe environment.

### If you suspect that a blockage is caused by a cross bore:

- Do not use mechanical means to clear the blockage
- Contact and get help from the utility provider(s) that may be involved
- Hand dig in the area where the blockage or cross bore may exist

### If a cross bore does exist:

- Stop all work
- From a safe place, contact the utility operator involved if they are not already on site

### If you suspect a natural gas leak by smelling, seeing or hearing gas escaping:

- Leave immediately and alert others to stay away from the area
- Go to a safe location and dial 9-1-1 or call Eversource at: 877-944-5325 (CT) or 800-592-2000 (MA)
- Remain outside until an Eversource technician can inspect the area
- Do not smoke, operate electrical switches or appliances (including both cell phones and land lines)
- Do not try to find the leak yourself or operate any gas valves
- Do not proceed with your work until Eversource notifies you that it is safe to do so

## Be Safe!

Call 8-1-1 before you clear. Assume that all obstructions could involve a cross bore.

### Safety recommendations when clearing sewer lines.

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#### Before you begin

- Look for trees or landscaping that could possibly be causing an obstruction.
- Ask if there has been any recent utility work in the area.
- Use an in-line video inspection device which could help you to better assess the blockage.

#### During the cleaning

- Avoid using a cutting tool to clear the line. Use equipment, like a plumbing snake or water jet, to attempt to clear the blockage.
- As the tool moves through the sewer line, feel for obstructions that do not seem to resemble tree roots or other common obstructions.

#### After you're finished

- Check the blades for yellow, black or orange plastic when they are withdrawn from the sewer line. Natural gas utility lines are typically made of these plastic colors.
- Watch for bubbles caused by natural gas escaping from the toilet or other entry point of the cutting equipment.

## Call 8-1-1, know what's below

Smart digging means calling 8-1-1 — before every job. One call to 8-1-1 gets all underground utility lines marked for FREE. The law requires you to call at least two full working days in Connecticut before digging begins. In Massachusetts, you need to call at least 72 business hours before digging begins. Eversource and other utilities will be notified so that they can locate and mark underground piping in the area. Anyone excavating is required to take special precautions when working near underground facilities. If you don't call, you are putting people in danger and violating the law.

## Important Safety Numbers

### Call Before You Dig (CT):

8-1-1 or 800-922-4455 [www.cbyd.com](http://www.cbyd.com)

### Dig Safe (MA):

8-1-1 or 1-888-DIG-SAFE [www.digsafe.com](http://www.digsafe.com)

### Eversource (CT) – Gas Emergency Hotline:

877-944-5325 [Eversource.com](http://Eversource.com)

### Eversource (MA) – Gas Emergency Hotline:

800-592-2000 [Eversource.com](http://Eversource.com)

## Color Coding System

Color coding is used to identify the type of underground facilities.

<b>RED</b>	Electric power lines, cables, conduit and lighting cables
<b>YELLOW</b>	Gas, oil, steam, petroleum or gaseous materials
<b>ORANGE</b>	Communication, alarm or signal lines, cables or conduit
<b>BLUE</b>	Potable water
<b>GREEN</b>	Sewers and drain lines
<b>PURPLE</b>	Reclaimed water, irrigation and slurry lines
<b>PINK</b>	Temporary survey markings
<b>WHITE</b>	Proposed excavation

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