

TOWNSHIP OF CHIPPEWA

19171 4TH STREET

P.O. Box 26

CHIPPEWA LAKE, MICHIGAN 49320-0026

Phone: (231)867-3777 Fax: (231)867-3777

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The Chippewa Lake Sewer System services 611 homes, cottages and businesses, around Chippewa Lake. The system was installed over 38 years ago to help protect the health of the lake eliminating seepage from private septic systems that was adding unwanted nutrients and pollutants to the lake causing many issues. It was even reported that the septic seepage pollution had changed the color of the lake. The 1980 preliminary study showed that without the sewer system Chippewa Lake had the potential to be classified as a "dead lake" by the Michigan DNR. The sewer system greatly improved the water quality and health for our all water sports lake.

The Chippewa Lake Sewer System consists of a main effluent water line that runs around the lake and connects to the households. The line is connected to three pumping stations that push the effluent water to the drain field located approximately 3 miles from the lake. The 40 acre drainfield is inspected annually by EGLE (DEQ), as part of the conditions of the wastewater permit. Located on the drainfields are 8 Monitoring Wells, which are extensively tested and reported to EGLE monthly.

Our system is unique in that it is a "Step-System". At each household there is an underground solids tank (septic tank), a pump chamber tank, and an effluent water line that connects to the main line. The solids remain in the tank and are pumped out in a five-year-cycle or when emergencies warrant. Effluent water is pumped through the service line to the mainline. Located at each property is also the individual system "Control Panel". The Control Panel contains an alarm and an alarm light along with some very sensitive components.

The Sewer System currently has two employees that are responsible for keeping the complete system running as it should.

The Sewer District's responsibility ends at the input side of the solids tank (the tank closest to the house). ***The dwellings sewer discharge pipe along with the dwellings plumbing pipes, electrical line from homeowner's electrical panel to the outside Sewer Control Panel, breakers and fixtures inside of the house are the responsibility of the home owner.*** The Sewer Control Panel is also property of the Sewer System and is typically located either on the side of the house or on a nearby post. **Only Sewer System employees may access the inside of the box. Any unauthorized tampering can lead to a \$1000 fine.**

If you are experiencing issues with the Sewer System, call the **Sewer Department Hotline at 231.867.3616. This number is also located on the Control Panel. If you are missing your weatherproof sticker please call for a replacement.** If your neighbor is not a full time resident or is away and you notice their alarm on, PLEASE do not hesitate to call. When calling you will get an answering machine. Leave your Name, your phone number, the address of the dwelling where the problem is occurring and a brief description of the problem. By using the answering machine it allows us to document the initial call complaint, time and date. The phone number is available, for sewer system service 24/7 and 365 days a year. *This phone number is only for service to the Chippewa Lake Sewer System. If you have questions regarding your bill or any other Township*

matter you need to call 231.867.3777. Likewise if you are experiencing a problem with your sewer system DO NOT CALL the Township Office's and leave a message. The phone at the Township Office is not manned 24/7 or on any weekend or holidays.

Septic System Tips:

Chippewa Sewer System responsibility begins at the tank. The home owner is responsible for any issues inside the house and the pipe going to the tank. So if your child just flushed their stuffed animal down the toilet and the toilet begins to back up, it's your responsibility and you will need to call a plumber not the Sewer Department Hotline. If you haven't done anything unusual and you see that the red light and alarm is on, in the control box, it is the Sewer District's responsibility and you should call the Sewer Department Hotline. Once again that number is **231.867.3616**. Plumbing Services have no authorization to access any components of the Chippewa Lake Sewer System.

We want you to notify us of any problems you are having with the system, **DO NOT** attempt to fix anything that is owned by the Sewer Department. This is a violation of the Chippewa Lake Sewer Ordinance and could result in fines and all related costs to damaged sewer system components.

If you call the Sewer Hotline between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m., please let us know if it is an emergency or if you are noticing anything unusual. In your message, please clearly state your name, address, type of problem, and whether you feel it's an emergency. If it's an emergency, don't hesitate to call, a Sewer employee will be there as soon as possible. **You need to be available to explain to the Sewer employee what you are experiencing.** So if you call, for service, late at night be prepared to answer your door.

Normally, there is no reason to turn the power off to the Sewer pump if you are going to be away. If you do turn power off to the pump, when you return and repower the pump, understand that the light and alarm may activate and it may take up to 15 minutes for the system to adjust. Do not call the hotline during this time, wait 15-20 minutes and if the alarm is still on, then call the Sewer Hotline. Other than closing up for the winter, there really isn't any reason to turn power off to the sewer pump. If you do turn off the power, REMEMBER to turn it back on when you return!

The Sewer Panel, is either located on the side of the house or close by on a post. The Control Panel is the property of the Chippewa Township Sewer System. **Do NOT** disturb or access the inside of the box for any reason. There is high voltage and delicate switches present inside the box and only employees of the Sewer Department are allowed to make any adjustments or changes. **Any** manipulation to the Sewer Panel can cause failure of the system of which damages will be charged back to the property owner.

Do NOT remove snow or drive over the Sewer System located on your property. Removing snow and driving over the sewer line can cause the frost to be driven deep in the ground, resulting in frozen pipes that can not be thawed until Spring. In this case, the tank at the residence must be emptied often by a Septic Tank Service, costing hundreds of dollars each time. This cost will be charged to the property owner. To prevent major issues in the winter, **Do NOT** plow snow or drive over property near the Sewer lines. Sewer lines are not routed under established driveways. The problem is only when yards are plowed and used for parking.

Sewer Tanks and Sewer Control Panels must remain accessible. Not only for emergencies, but also for maintenance. Landscaping can get out of control quickly. If a Sewer Employee

has to remove the obstruction, probably neither you nor the employee will be happy with the result. DIY projects such as unapproved decks can also be a problem. Please make sure that the tank lids are accessible and that the control panel can be accessed and seen from the road/driveway (the exception to this are Control Panels installed on opposite side of the structure from the road/driveway). Sewer Department employees constantly look for lights as they drive areas servicing other systems.

If you have called the hotline asking for help but then realize the problem has resolved itself, please call the hotline back to disregard your previous call. Sewer employees work a lot of hours and are on call 24/7. Letting them know that they do not need to respond is greatly appreciated. Please keep in mind, especially on high volume weekends/holidays, that the Sewer Maintenance Department will respond as quickly as they can. They may already have multiple calls in front of yours.

If you have an issue, with the sewer system, and forget to call before you leave for home. Please call as soon as possible, **Do NOT** wait until you come back up. If you notice the alarm on, at your neighbors, call it in!

Do NOT flush wipes, even if they say flushable, down your toilet. These have been documented in clogging the effluent pumps. The same for feminine hygiene products and diapers. You would be astounded at things the maintenance department has recovered caught in the pumps, while on service calls!

NO personal equipment such as sump pumps, rain gutters, etc. are to be attached into or drain directly into the Chippewa Township Sewer System. Any damages done to personal property or sewer system as a result of such additional equipment; shall be the property owner's responsibility

If your property is used as a rental. **PLEASE** make sure you share this newsletter and the Emergency Hotline Number with your renter.

As always, if you have any suggestions, comments or need further information, please call us at 231.867.3777. Social Media does not always provide the correct answers.

Have a SAFE and FUN Summer!!!
The Chippewa Township Board