

SEWER AND STORM DRAIN CONNECTIONS – THE S-PERMIT

8. SEWER AND STORM DRAIN CONNECTIONS – The S-Permit

8.1 S-Permit Description and Purpose

The sewage from a building is carried through the building's sewer pipe to the property line. At the property line, the building's sewer pipe is connected to a 6-inch house connection sewer (also known as a lateral connection or service connection), which carries the sewage to a local mainline sewer line (usually an 8-inch clay pipe under the middle of the street). Collector and interceptor sewers collect the sewage from local sewers and carry it to an outfall sewer. Outfall sewers are very large pipes, sometimes up to 10 feet in diameter. These pipes carry the sewage to the treatment plants. At the treatment plants, solids are separated from the water. After treating the water, it is discharged into the ocean, used for irrigation, or pumped back into the ground.

To connect to the City of Los Angeles Sewer System, a property owner shall obtain a Sewerage Facilities Charge (SFC)/Bonded Sewer Fee Certificate and a Sewer Permit from the appropriate district office.

Storm Drain connections are made from the property line to a catch basin or a storm drain pipe in the public right-of-way. The storm water is collected in area drains on private property. The area drains may be connected to the storm drain connection pipe at the property line.

The Department of Public Works requires a Sewer Permit (S-Permit) for a new connection of a property's sewer line to the City's sewer system or the repair of an existing connection. The Bureau of Engineering (BOE) issues the S-Permit over-the-counter. Please contact the appropriate district office to complete the application for the S-Permit. Before the S-Permit is issued for a new house connection sewer, the SFC and Bonded Sewer Fees, if applicable, must be paid then the SFC Certificate will be issued for the property.

Sewerage Facilities Charge (SFC) or Sewer Certificate – This charge is basically your share of the cost of design and construction of the all sewer facilities (local, collector, interceptor, outfall sewers and treatment plants). According to Section [64.11.2](#) of the Los Angeles Municipal Code, this charge became effective on June 17, 1970. All buildings built before this date are “grandfathered in” and did not pay this charge. This charge is collected at the time of processing a building permit application for a new building, addition to an existing building, and/or a change of use of the existing building. Credit will be given to those properties with a demolition permit on or after June 17, 1970.

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This charge depends upon the usage of a property, for example: residential, commercial, etc., and the area of the building. If the use and area increase then additional fees are collected. If the use and area decrease then a credit remains with the property and will be applied toward future development of the property.

In case of industrial use, this credit may be transferred to another property of the same use. Upon receipt of these charges a Sewer Certificate is issued that indicates the address, legal description, usage, area of the building, and amount of fee charged or credited to a property. The following table shows the charges and credits. Please note that special cases will be handled differently.

Bonded Sewer Fees and Bonded Lateral Fees

Any person desiring a permit to connect or to construct a Special House Connection Sewer or Bonded Sewer House Connection Sewer shall make a written application to the Board, giving such information as the Board may require. The Board may issue a permit to make such sewer connection upon payment of fees, and in addition to payment of a charge per front foot of the lot sought to be connected, if said lot is rectangular and has an ordinary area of approximately 6,500 square feet.

When the shape of a lot is other than the usual rectangular shape or unusual in area, and the strict adherence to the above mentioned provision would require a property owner to pay amount not commensurate with the benefits to be received, the provisions of this section as to the limits of the frontage of a lot to be assessed may be modified by the Board.

Nothing in this section shall be deemed or construed to apply to the issuing of a permit for the construction of Bonded Sewer House Connection Sewers if the property sought to be connected, although abutting on a Bonded Sewer, has been duly assessed for a public sewer constructed in the front, rear or at the side of each property.

Upon giving such information as the Board may require on forms to be furnished for the purpose, payment of the charges may be made in advance of the application for, or the issuance of, the permit to make such connection to any bonded sewer, and, upon such payment having been made, the applicant for the permit to connect shall be entitled to such permit upon payment of the fees prescribed in the LAMC, Sections [64.11.2](#), [64.15](#) and [64.16.1](#).

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Types of Connections

Property Line Connection - Sewer main lines (local sewers) are in the public rights-of-way (streets) and in the public sanitary sewer easements over private properties. If a service connection (pipe from the local sewer to the property line) is available, then the S-Permit is for a property line connection. The City's sewer maps show the availability of this service connection. A regular plumber or contractor may obtain this "property line connection" S-Permit.

New Lateral, House Connection or Service Connection - If a house connection sewer is not available at the property line, then the permit is for the construction of a new house connection sewer. In this case the permit is issued to a Bonded Sewer Contractor only. There is a special qualification given to these contractors for working in the public rights-of-way by the Board of Public Works, per LAMC Section [64.15.1](#). Each lot must have a separate sewer connection. If a property is split and there are separate buildings on each lot, then each building must have its own separate connection.

Authority

Sewers – Undedicated Streets - LAMC Section [64.11](#) states no person shall connect any sewer which has been or may hereafter be constructed in any street, prior to the dedication and acceptance of such street by the City Council, with any public sewer unless such sewer has been laid under the supervision and to the satisfaction of the Board and in accordance with the specifications for public sewers adopted by the City Council and on file in the office of the City Clerk, and in accordance with plans and profiles approved by the City Engineer.

House Connection Sewer – LAMC, Section [64.11.1](#) states that not more than one lot shall be connected to any one house connection sewer except for the following exceptions:

Exception 1: In a case where a single house connection has previously served multiple structures on an individual lot or parcel and that lot or parcel has been split, the use of the original house connection sewer may be allowed, at the discretion of the City Engineer, for more than one lot if all the following conditions are all adhered to:

- a. There are four or less sewer structures involved.
- b. The structure on the split lot now in question can not be sewer on the street fronting this split portion of the original lot or parcel by connecting to an existing available sewer.

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- c. There is not space available or cooperation from the downstream property owner(s) to place another house connection in an easement on the other portions of the original lot or parcel.
- d. The existing house connection sewer has been inspected by closed circuit television (CCTV).
- e. All property owners using this shared house connection sewer must sign and record agreements with the County Recorder that all properties using this shared house connection sewer are mutually responsible for its maintenance and repair.

Exception 2: In the case of a Small Lot Subdivision as defined in Sections [12.03](#), [12.09](#), [12.12.1](#), [12.21](#) and [12.22](#) of this Code an individual house connection sewer can serve more than one lot subject to the following conditions:

- a. The size of the house connection sewer shall be determined by the Bureau of Engineering and included in the subdivision conditions.
- b. A sewer maintenance hole shall be required on the mainline sewer in the street adjacent to the property, if the size of the house connection will not permit a standard “wye” connection to the main line sewer.
- c. A Homeowners Association Agreement or Maintenance Agreement to run in perpetuity which includes common shared maintenance responsibility for the shared house connection sewer shall be created binding all property owners of the subject Small Lot Subdivision and filed with the Los Angeles County Recorder on all parcels involved.

House Sewer Connection – Permit – LAMC, Section [64.12](#) states

- (a) No person shall make, construct, alter, or repair any house connection sewer, bonded house connection sewer, special house connection sewer, industrial waste sewer connection, industrial waste storm drain connection, storm drain connection, or special drainage connection, or any portion of any such sewer or storm drain connections, including sampling manholes, or connect any house sewer, soil pipe, or plumbing to any such sewer or storm drain connections or to a sewer or storm drain under the jurisdiction of the City of Los Angeles, without first obtaining a written permit therefore from the Board of Public Works.

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- (b) Persons desiring to obtain a permit for any of the purposes enumerated in Sections 64.12 to 64.22 inclusive, shall file with the Board a written application therefore signed by the applicant, on printed forms, furnished by it for that purpose. The application shall contain such information as the Board may require. If it appears from the application that the work to be performed thereunder is to be done according to the regulations contained or referred to in this article, governing the doing of such work, a permit shall be issued upon payment of the permit charges required or referred to in Section 64.15.
- (c) The Board before granting any permit in accordance with the provisions of Sections 64.12 to 64.22 inclusive, which will necessitate any excavation in, upon or under any State highway in this City or the making of a connection to a sewer or house connection sewer for which a permit is also required from a County Sanitation District, or a political subdivision other than this City, shall require such permit to be presented for inspection.
- (d) Nothing in this section shall be deemed or construed to require the application for or the issuance of a permit for the purpose of removing stoppages in any house connection sewer, except when it is necessary to replace any part or all of such sewer connection or to excavate in any street or sidewalk or sewer easement in connection therewith.
- (e) A permit under which an excavation, tunnel, or the laying of sewer, or storm drain pipe in any public street is contemplated will be issued only to other departments of the City, other governmental agencies, or contractors holding a valid contractor's license issued by the Contractors' License Board of the State of California in the classification of A-1 General Engineering, B-1 General Building, C-36 Plumbing, or C-42 Sewer, Sewage Disposal, Drain, Cement Pipe Laying. (Added by Ord. No. 121,900, Eff. 6/4/62.)

EXCEPTION:

A permit for making sewer connections at the property line may be issued to any responsible person when in the opinion of the Board the granting of such permit will not endanger public property or jeopardize the public's interests.

- (f) Any person performing work pursuant to a permit issued under this section shall comply with all the provisions of Section 62.03.1 of this Code. (Added by Ord. No. 150,478, Eff. 2/6/78.)

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Permit Exemptions – LAMC, Section [64.13](#)

The provisions of Section [64.12](#) requiring permits for the construction of house connection sewers shall not be construed to apply to contractors constructing house connection sewers under contracts entered into under proceedings had or taken pursuant to any of the procedure ordinances of this City, or the County of Los Angeles, or the Statutes of the State of California, or other contracts authorized by the City Council, providing for the construction of such house connection sewers.

How long does it take to get an S-Permit?

This is an over-the-counter permit. When all documents, including Sewerage Facilities Charges, any required easement, sewer capacity and the constructed building are ready, then the S-Permit may be issued in less than 30 minutes.

How long is an S-Permit valid?

An S-Permit is good for two years from the date of issuance.

When does an S-Permit expire?

The S-Permit expires two years from the date that it was issued. If the job is in progress and inspection is on going, then it will not expire.

How will the City determine if a project is being performed diligently?

The Bureau of Contract Administration of the Department of Public Works will make that determination depending on the job conditions that may delay the project.

What is the Sewer Facilities Charge (SFC)?

The Sewer Facilities Charge is collected to pay for sewer infrastructure improvements. Monies are collected by the BOE for the Bureau of Sanitation (BOS) which manages the City's sewer system. The SFC is based upon the volume of flow and the strength (or quality) of sewage discharged into the City's sewer system. The SFC is due when construction and use triggers a net increase in flow and or sewage strength. The SFC is tied to individual parcels of land and is based on improvements to each parcel. SFC credit is based on the use and area of an existing building and buildings demolished after June 16, 1970. SFC fees are calculated based on the proposed new building use and area. SFC credits are used to offset SFC fees. The amount of the SFC rate is based on use and formulas

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developed by the BOS. The current rate was established by Ordinance on June 6, 1996.

S-Permit Extension

Paying the basic fee plus the surcharges (2% and 7%) will renew the permit for another two years. The reason for requesting a permit extension must be reasonable and beyond the control of the applicant.

Revised S-Permitd

These permits may be revised to accommodate any change in scope of work. Permit fees will be adjusted, additional fees or refunds will be made to reflect any change.

Expired S-Permit with Work Still Planned

Once the S-Permit is issued and inspection has started, then the project may go on until satisfactorily completed. As long as the applicant is progressing with the work described in the permit diligently and responsibly, then the permit stays in effect until completion of work.