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## LESSON 1: KEY CONCEPTS

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### What is a sewer camera inspection?

#### Basic Description:

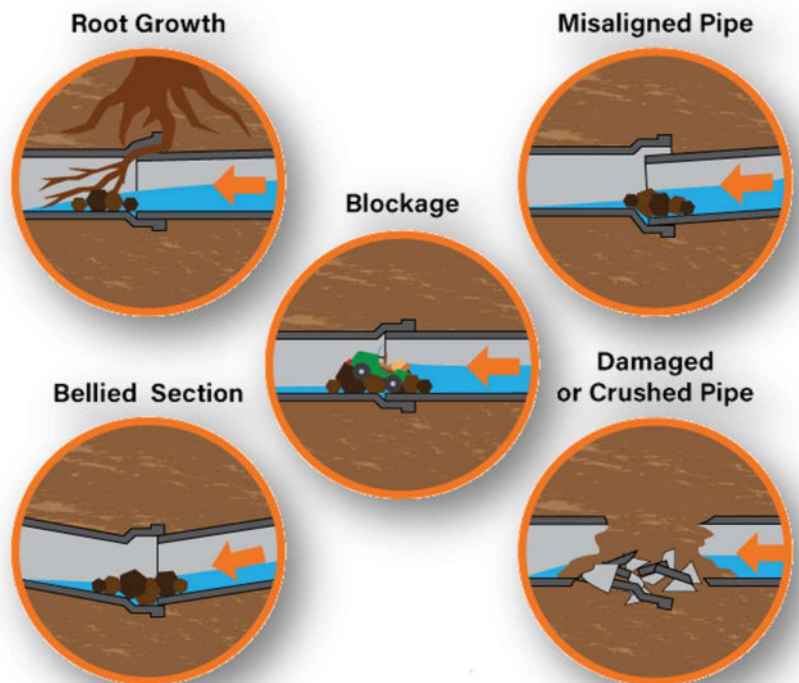
- A licensed inspector will insert a mini video camera into the sewer line through the sewer cleanout. When no main cleanout exists, then inspector may utilize a sink cleanout or sewer vent.
- If no obstructions are encountered, he or she will inspect the main lateral from the cleanout to the city main and directly back under the house.
- A functioning sewer line may have problems that do not currently affect the performance of the line. However, certain conditions may cause a future sewer backup leading to an unexpected emergency line repair or replacement.

#### ASHI Definition:

- The function of a sewer lateral camera inspection is to find out if there are any concerns with the main sewer lateral line of a home or building.
- The main lateral sewer service line is the waste pipe that extends from the building, under or through the foundation wall or an exterior wall to the sewer main, sewer easement, HOA tap, or private drain system.
- Sewer lateral inspections are performed using a fiber optic waterproof camera that is pushed through the sewer laterally. The sewer lateral inspector will provide a written report with a narrated video recording of the inspection, as seen from the camera, in the main sewer lateral line.

### Common Defects - Main Sewer Lateral

- Tree roots - root infiltration can cause damage quickly
- Broken, collapsed, cracked, or misaligned pipes - shifting soil or frozen ground
- Blockage - grease or some other object is restricting proper water flow
- Pipe corrosion or deterioration - older drainpipe risk rust or scaling leading leaks or collapse
- Bellied pipe – standing water and converged waste from sunken lines or improper slope
- Leaking joints – allows sewage to escape and create adverse and/or unsanitary conditions



## Sewer Camera Limitations

- Typically, the 2" secondary lines, laundry lines, floor drains and kitchen lines are not included in this inspection.
- Majority of leaks cannot be detected by a sewer camera inspection
- The sewer lateral inspection is outside of the scope of a home inspection, as sewer lateral pipes cannot be visually inspected without specialized equipment.

## Can I perform sewer camera inspections?

### TREC Standards of Practice

- TREC Home Inspection – is a non-invasive, visual inspection on the day of
- Limitations - related to SOP requirements, accessibility, and safety

#### Inspection - Scope and Limitations

- Not a **Pass-Fail** Inspection – we are not grading the home
- **Limited Scope** – governed by TREC Standards of Practice and is representative in nature
- **Non-Invasive** – visual inspection limited by conditions & accessibility
- Not a **Code-Compliance** Inspection – home can pre-date standards
- Not a **Warranty** – cannot guarantee future performance
- **Further Evaluation** – generalist not specialists; recommend

#### Legal Ethics Class – Sewer Line Inspections

##### *What Was:*

- Section §535.231 of the SOPs require an inspector to operate plumbing fixtures, **test for drain performance**, and to **report deficiencies** in water supply pipes and **waste pipes**. An inspector can inspect the condition of an accessible pipe by visually inspecting the exterior of the pipe, by feeling the exterior with his or her hand, or by using a mirror or a camera that **does not enter the sewer pipe**.
- According to the **Texas State Board of Plumbing Examiners**, a sewer scope inspection must be performed by a **licensed plumber**. Because a TREC inspector is specifically exempt from inspecting for defects or deficiencies that are **otherwise buried, hidden, latent, or concealed**, unless an inspector is also a licensed plumber, an inspector should not inspect the interior of pipes using specialized invasive techniques or equipment such as a sewer scope. An inspector who performs a sewer scope inspection who is not also licensed **could be subject to disciplinary action** by TREC or the Board of Plumbing Examiners.

### TSBPE – Texas State Board of Plumbing Examiners

Established: 1947

Mission: “to protect Texas citizens against the health and safety hazards that can result from improperly installed plumbing, gas, and medical gas systems”

### Sunset Review Act – May 2019

*Allows lawmakers to review the efficacy of governmental agencies.*

- **Texas Occupations Code:** Pursuant to Section 1301.003 of the Texas Occupations Code, the Board is subject to the Sunset Act, and unless legislative action is taken, the Board is abolished, and Chapter 1301 of the Occupations Code (“Plumbing License Law” or “PLL”) expires, effective September 1, 2019.

- **Recommendation:** The Sunset Advisory Commission recommended transferring administration and enforcement of the PLL to the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation ("TDLR"). This recommendation was included in Senate Bill 621 ("SB621") during the 86th Legislature, Regular Session.
- **Adjournment:** On May 27, 2019, the 86th Legislature, Regular Session, finally adjourned, and the Legislature took no action to amend the Sunset Act provisions of the Plumbing License Law. As a result, the recommended transfer of the regulation of plumbing to TDLR did not occur, and the Board is set to be abolished as required by statute. **As a result, effective September 1, 2019 the Board is abolished**, and all requirements of the Plumbing License Law will cease to apply.

### Governor's Executive Order – June 2019

- Issued Executive Order (GA6) – extend activity of TSBPE past the expiration date
- Reasoning - To fulfill the demands for rebuilding after Hurricane Harvey and keeping Texas prepared and able to recover from future disasters, it is necessary to continue the Board to perform its indispensable role in protecting Texans

### Attorney General's Opinion – March 2020

Occupations Code chapter 1102' s **express authorization for a real estate inspector to provide an opinion on real estate's "plumbing systems" likely includes a camera inspection**. Occupations Code chapter 1301 requires a person to have a license to engage in activities that constitute plumbing. The Texas State Board of Plumbing Examiners has by rule defined the "service" of plumbing to include performing a camera inspection. To the extent this rule requires a real estate inspector to get a plumber's license to do a job within the scope of his or her real estate inspector's license, **the rule impermissibly imposes an additional burden, limit, or condition** in addition to what the Legislature has required. Accordingly, **a court would have a basis to conclude that the rule is invalid**, as applied to camera inspections performed by real estate inspectors.

### TSBPE Rule Revision – August 2020

NEW RULE – Effective August 16, 2020 – Removed highlighted language

(37)Plumbing--

(A)All piping, fixtures, appurtenances, and appliances, including disposal systems, drain or waste pipes, multipurpose residential fire protection sprinkler systems or any combination of these that: supply, distribute, circulate, recirculate, drain, or eliminate water, gas, medical gasses and vacuum, liquids, and sewage for all personal or domestic purposes in and about buildings where persons live, work, or assemble; connect the building on its outside with the source of water, gas, or other liquid supply, or combinations of these, on the premises, or the water main on public property; and carry waste water or sewage from or within a building to the sewer service lateral on public property or the disposal or septic terminal that holds private or domestic sewage.

(B)The installation, repair, service, maintenance, alteration, or renovation of all piping, fixtures, appurtenances, and appliances on premises where persons live, work, or assemble that supply gas, medical gasses and vacuum, water, liquids, or any combination of these, or dispose of waste water or sewage. Plumbing includes the treatment of rainwater to supply a plumbing fixture or appliance. The term "service" includes, but is not limited to, cleaning a drain or sewer line using a cable or pressurized fluid.




## TREC Inspector Advisory Committee Recognition – October 2020

### TREC Recognizes:

- Ruling Change
- No Longer Requires License
- No SOP for Activity
- Inspector Competence

trec.texas.gov/article/chair-inspector-committee-october-2020




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### From the Chair - Inspector Committee - October 2020

10-14-2020 by: Lee Warren



The Inspector Advisory Committee met on October 12 via teleconference. There were some public comments submitted in response to the newly proposed Consumer Protection Notice, and most of the feedback was positive. The new notice includes verbiage to inform consumers that inspectors are required to carry E&O insurance, and that inspectors have the ability to limit their liability through the use of an agreement between themselves and their client.

The Plumbing Board has modified their previous rule that required a plumbing license in order to perform sewer line scope inspections. The new rule no longer requires a plumbing license for that activity. Though the IAC does not feel it prudent to establish a specific SOP for this activity, inspectors are reminded that license holders must be competent in that particular field should they choose to perform such inspections.

There was also a discussion about the multitude of different types of inspection report writing software that is being used in the market. There are some versions of software that produce a primary report which is not the promulgated 7-5 form that all inspectors are required to provide to a client. The software may have the 7-5 form at the end of their report or added as a separate file from their form. This could be a violation of the TREC rules, depending on a number of different factors. A good rule of thumb is that the 7-5 form should be the first thing that a client sees when they receive the report itself. If the software company wants to supplement that with their own format of a report, then that should only come after the 7-5 version is presented to the client.

The promulgated form follows a very specific format and has its own set of rules. This is done for consistency across the board to both consumers and to licensees. Presenting clients with another style, or format, for them to be provided the information about the inspection findings is certainly allowed, and may be beneficial for some clients. However, the alternative report style should follow the promulgated 7-5 form that is required for inspectors to provide with every inspection.

The next meeting of the Inspector Advisory Committee will be on January 15 at 10 am. More than likely this meeting will also be via teleconference but stay tuned to the TREC website for more details.