
City of Tempe Orangeburg Pipe

What is it?

"Orangeburg" is the brand name of a bituminous fiber sewer pipe material that was manufactured by Orangeburg Manufacturing Company. The Orangeburg sewer pipe was manufactured in accordance with two national standards, Federal Specification SS-P-356 and Commercial Standard CS 116-54.

The Uniform Plumbing Code refers to this type of piping as Bituminous Fiber Sewer Pipe. This type of piping was typically manufactured by rolling bituminous material (tar) and paper into the shape of a tube.

When was it used?

Bituminous fiber Sewer Pipe was commonly used in the 1960's and 1970's to make the sewer line connection from houses to the public sewer. Other sewer pipe materials were also used during this time period, such as cast iron or vitrified clay. Therefore, not all houses constructed during this time period were connected to the public sewer with Bituminous Fiber Sewer Pipe.

What problems have been experienced with Orangeburg Sewer Installations?

The bituminous material tends to deteriorate with age. As the material deteriorates the pipe begins to be flattened out and no longer maintains a round interior circumference. The flattened pipe can be further damaged by the use of router tools.

In addition, the pipes are subject to invasion by plant roots. The plant roots grow within the pipe and eventually restrict or block the flow.

These problems are manifested in repeated backups of the sewer line from the house to the public sewer in the street or alleyway. Clearing affected sewer lines with mechanical router tools will result in only a temporary improvement.

Was it approved by the Tempe's Plumbing Code?

Yes, our records indicate that the Uniform Plumbing Code allowed the use of Bituminous Fiber Sewer Pipe to be used between 1955 and 1982. The City of Tempe adopted the Uniform Plumbing Code during this period of time and into the present.

Where could Orangeburg be used?

The material was restricted to the outside of residential occupancies only. The material was never approved for use under any building.

In the early 1970's plastic piping materials were introduced into the Uniform Plumbing Code and their use has been common ever since. This would include PVC and ABS material.

How do I know if my house has Orangeburg pipe?

First, refer to the map on the reverse side to locate the areas of the city that were developed between 1940 and 1970. **Please note that none of these areas are south of Baseline Road.** This will give you an indication as to what areas may have Orangeburg sewer pipes.

If you are in one of the areas developed during this time, then further investigation is warranted. The best way to know for sure what type of material has been used for the sewer line is to call a licensed plumber and have them investigate it. While this may not always be easy, it is the best way.

Does the City have records of what houses have Orangeburg sewer lines?

No, unfortunately the city records do not contain this level of detail. Again, the best way to determine if your specific house has an Orangeburg sewer line is to call a licensed plumber and have them investigate.

Are Permits required to replace my sewer line?

Yes, a plumbing permit is required to replace the sewer line. This permit may be obtained by the person performing the work or by the homeowner. It also requires an inspection approval by the Building Safety Department before the new sewer line is covered. This will ensure that the new line has been installed properly and is in conformance with the code. Contact a Plan Reviewer to estimate the permit fee.

What is the cost of replacing my sewer line?

This will depend greatly on the length of the sewer line to be replaced, the depth of the line, any paving or concrete, the accessibility of the site, and any landscaping that may need to be disturbed in the process. In short, it is the specifics of your particular job that will determine the price. The best thing to do is to obtain bids from at least three licensed contractors and then check with the Registrar of Contractors to obtain information regarding the specific contractor you intend to use. You may also ask that contractor for references and then check those references until you are comfortable with your choice.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please call the City of Tempe Building Safety/ Inspections at 480-350-8341.

Residential Properties Developed between 1940 and 1970
(Areas that may have Orangeburg sewer pipe)

