



***City Stakeholder
Frequently Asked Questions***



An NLC Enterprise Programs Partner

Service Line Warranty Program Frequently Asked Questions

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Service Line Warranties of America ("SLWA") & National League of Cities ("NLC") Background

■ Who is Service Line Warranties of America?

SLWA is a private company that provides optional water and/or sewer service line warranties to homeowners. SLWA is proud to have been selected by the NLC as an Enterprise Programs Partner. The NLC, representing over 218 million Americans, is the nation's oldest and largest organization devoted to strengthening and promoting cities as centers of opportunity, leadership and governance. After almost a decade in business, SLWA has an A+ rating with the Better Business Bureau.

The program is offered at no cost to the City and no public funds are used to promote or operate the program. Importantly, SLWA is solely responsible for the administration and service of the warranty programs.

■ Who is the NLC?

The NLC is an organization dedicated to helping city leaders build better communities. Working in partnership with the 49 state municipal leagues, the NLC serves as a resource to and an advocate for the more than 19,000 cities, villages and towns it represents.

■ Why did the NLC select a single company to introduce these warranties?

The NLC recognized the need for these warranties and realized that there were economies of scale that could be achieved through the aggregation of potential homeowners that would result in a lower cost to the homeowner. They also realized that warranties are only as good as the company offering them and after a careful review of providers, it was determined that SLWA had the history and proven track record of providing the superior customer service required for this program.

■ Is SLWA a member of the Better Business Bureau?

Yes. SLWA has been a member of the Better Business Bureau since 2003 and they are very proud of their exemplary record. SLWA is also approved by the appropriate state regulatory body to operate in the states where it provides coverage.

■ What happens if Service Line Warranties of America goes out of business? What happens to money paid in premiums?

All of SLWA's contracts are month to month and SLWA must legally maintain adequate reserves to satisfy all claims filed. Furthermore, SLWA has filed an application and received state approval in all states in which it operates. Each state has different requirements to ensure consumer protection and SLWA is compliant in maintaining the legally required financial reserves in the form of bonds, funded cash reserves or other financial security depending on the jurisdiction's requirements. Should some unforeseeable event cause undue financial hardship on the company, the rules established by the various state agencies ensures that SLWA's customers are provided with adequate protection that their claims would be paid.

■ Where can I go to find out more about this program?

Please visit SLWA's website at www.SLWofA.com or call them directly at 1-866-922-9006.

City Participation

■ Is this really a letter from the City?

Yes, the City worked with Service Line Warranties of America to make you aware of a program that could potentially save you a lot of money.

■ Why is my City sending this letter to me?

The National League of Cities recognized homeowner water/sewer line warranty services as something many homeowners have expressed an interest. It came to their attention that several state leagues had already endorsed and were already working with SLWA. For this reason, they carefully reviewed SLWA and determined Service Line Warranties of America to be the best option of those companies providing these types of warranties.

Your City Council simply wanted to share the results of the NLC research with its homeowners. So, letters were mailed out by SLWA for the sole purpose of providing program information. Homeowners who wish to learn more about this program or want to enroll are encouraged to contact SLWA directly at the number provided in your letter. Homeowners who are not interested in these services may disregard the letter entirely.

If you choose to enroll in this program, please do so with the understanding that your City in no way warrants or is liable for the work or performance of Service Line Warranties of America. We are only making you aware of the availability of this product since water and sewer line repairs can be very expensive.

■ **Why is the City endorsing this program?**

In these difficult economic times, the City felt it was important to educate residents that they are responsible for the service lines on their property and to also inform you that there was a program offered through a reputable company that could potentially save you a lot of money.

■ **Why is the City working with Service Line Warranties of America for this program?**

This program was brought to the City through an Enterprise Program of the National League of Cities administered by Service Line Warranties of America. SLWA was selected by the NLC because of their high customer service and quality ratings. SLWA has been in business for nearly 10 years and has an A+ rating from the Better Business Bureau. In addition, SLWA was also unanimously selected by the North Central Texas Council of Governments as a shared service provider after a careful review and full vetting by a panel of member cities.

■ **Did the City pay for this mailing?**

No. SLWA pays for all aspects of the program including marketing, customer service and repairs.

■ **Does anyone in my City have an ownership position in SLWA or benefit personally from this program?**

No. SLWA is independently owned and operated and no City official, employee or relative receives any personal compensation whatsoever. In other words, no one in your City is participating for personal gain.

■ **What is in this Program for the City?**

This program provides several benefits for the City. First, it educates residents of their service line responsibility. Secondly, SLWA only uses qualified local contractors so repair dollars stay within the community, which helps us all. Lastly, the City can be assured that all repairs are performed to code and that all appropriate permitting is pulled. This saves the City money because it encourages residents to report water and sewer leaks in a timely manner. Timely water line repairs conserve water and reduce water loss for the City. Timely sewer line repairs minimize wastewater pollution.

■ **Is the City receiving any compensation from SLWA?**

SLWA does offer the City itself compensation for allowing the use of the City seal on the letter. Why? The support of the City alerts residents of the legitimacy of the program resulting in more enrollments, which in turn allows SLWA to offer a lower price to the City's residents because of the increased participation.

■ **Is there a minimum participation necessary for a City to stay in the program?**

No, there is no minimum participation required.

Marketing Letters

■ **A resident is upset because they did not receive the letter. Why didn't they?**

SLWA purchases a list of city homeowners based on the city boundary map from an independent list vendor, Infogroup. Infogroup is an active member of the Direct Marketing Association ("DMA") and adheres to all industry guidelines and government laws regarding responsible use and distribution of personal information. Therefore, the resident may have at one time requested they be placed on a "Do Not Solicit" list which both Infogroup and SLWA would have to honor. Conversely, the US post office enforces that each address be registered as deliverable – the resident may have fallen off the list during the USPS "cleansing" which occurs before the letter can be put in the mail.

■ **A resident is upset that the letter arrived in the name of their deceased spouse. Why did this happen?**

SLWA purchases a list of city homeowners based on the city boundary map from an independent list vendor, Infogroup. Chances are that the source files used by this vendor have not been updated yet to reflect this change. If the resident elects to enroll, all future correspondence from SLWA to the resident will be corrected. SLWA cannot legally submit the requested name change to the DMA, which is a national, nonprofit organization, due to privacy laws.

■ **A resident does not want to receive any solicitations. How can this be accomplished?**

Contacting SLWA at 1-866-922-9006 will ensure that SLWA will not contact this resident again (keep in mind however that if the request comes in before the 2nd letter is sent, the customer will in fact receive the second letter because there is not an opportunity to pull it from the post office). If the customer does not want to receive any solicitations from anyone ever again, they will need to go directly to the Direct Mail Association, which is a national, non-profit organization which keeps a national repository of "DNS" requests. Neither SLWA nor Infogroup is legally allowed to submit the residents name to the DMA due to privacy laws.

■ **What should a resident do if they want more information and did not get the letter?**

The resident can call SLWA directly at 1-866-922-9006 to request information or get a copy of the letter sent to them. They can also visit SLWA's website at www.SLWofA.com to view the details and enroll.

Warranty Products

Utility Line Responsibility

■ **Isn't my City or utility company responsible for my lines? If not, doesn't my Homeowner's Insurance cover this type of Repair?**

Typically no. Most homeowners are surprised to learn that they are responsible for the repair and replacement of their broken or leaking utility lines, and most homeowners policies will pay to repair the damage created by failed utility lines but not for the repair itself. We encourage you to call your insurance company to determine your actual coverage. If you live in a condominium or duplex dwelling, we encourage you to contact your homeowners association to determine if you need this coverage prior to enrollment.

■ **What part of my water or sewer line am I responsible for maintaining?**

Homeowner responsibility varies greatly across the U.S. In some areas, the utility is responsible for the sewer lateral that runs from the main line to the right-of-way, property line or sewer clean-out near the curb. In other areas, the utility is not responsible for any portion of the lateral line that runs beyond the main line. For water service lines, the utility generally only covers the portion of the line from the main to the curb stop valve or water meter at the edge of the property. Regardless of these local differences, SLWA will provide coverage for the portion of the service line for which you are responsible.

Coverage

■ **What causes cracks, holes or leaks in utility lines?**

Time: Wear and tear over time. It can be that simple. Over time, fittings can fail, pipes can corrode and your house can shift and settle. A small crack or pinhole develops and leads to a leak. Next thing you know, your utility line has failed.

Weather: Freezing, thawing; rain, snow; each change of seasons brings with it a different challenge to your utility lines, and the potential for cracks and leaks.

Landscaping: We all admire the beauty of a landscape graced with trees and shrubbery, but tree roots are not friends of your utility lines. Wrapping themselves around your lines, they will eventually cause cracks, leaks and clogs.

■ **What items are included as part of the warranty?**

The external water and/or sewer line warranty covers the underground service line from the foundation of your home to the point where the line becomes the utility's responsibility. If any part of the line is broken and/or leaking, SLWA will repair or replace the line in order to restore the service (including clearing tree roots from the water or sewer line).

■ **What items are excluded as part of the warranty?**

The water line warranty does not cover the costs of repairs to the meter or meter vault nor does it cover branch lines to sprinklers, pools, hot tubs, etc. The sewer line warranty does not cover septic systems. The warranties are designed to ensure that the homeowner has utility service to the primary residence for purposes of drinking, cooking and cleaning. Repairs for damages caused by the homeowner, a third party, natural disaster, act of God or by other insurable causes are also not covered. Complete Terms and Conditions for your residence can be viewed by visiting www.SLWofA.com. You will be asked to enter your zip code to ensure the correct version is displayed.

■ **Does the warranty include the inside of the house?**

No. The external water and sewer line warranties do not provide coverage for inside the house.

■ **Who replaces landscaping if damaged?**

SLWA will provide basic restoration to the site. This includes filling in the holes, mounding the trench (to allow for settling) and raking and seeding the affected area. Restoration does not include replacing trees or shrubs or repairing private paved/concrete surfaces.

■ **Is soil movement due to ground shifting covered?**

Yes, ground shifting is one of the major causes for water and sewer line breaks. If the line is broken and leaking, the repair is covered under the warranty.

■ **Is tree root damage covered?**

Yes, invasive tree roots are another major cause for water and sewer line failures. If the line is broken, leaking or clogged, the repair is covered under the warranty.

■ **Will the company inspect the lines for residents?**

While SLWA reserves the right to inspect lines for pre-existing conditions, they generally do not inspect lines for residents to look for leaks or other problems. SLWA responds to customers who report a claim for a line leak, clog or other failure from normal wear and tear.

■ **When does my warranty start?**

Coverage begins 30 days after enrollment unless otherwise noted through a promotional letter.

■ **The Coverage Cap looks adequate but does SLWA have an annual or lifetime restriction on how much they will pay to repair?**

No. Unlike some other warranties available, SLWA provides you with the full coverage per incident. They will pay up to your coverage amount each and every time you need them. SLWA does not deduct prior repair expenses from your coverage cap or limit the amount they will pay annually.

■ **What are the event caps for the warranty? What are the annual caps per household?**

Coverage caps listed in the Terms & Conditions are per occurrence as follows:

Water — \$4,000 plus an additional \$500 for public sidewalk cutting, if necessary

Sewer — \$4,000 plus an additional \$4,000 for public street cutting, if necessary

There are no annual or lifetime caps for coverage. Coverage is provided on a per incident basis and all work is warranted for one year. It has been SLWA's experience that these coverage caps will more than adequately provide coverage 99.9% of the time. In the rare instance that the repair is greater than the coverage provided, SLWA will work closely with the contractor to provide the homeowner the additional work at SLWA's discounted cost. **Please note – if your city has special coverage situations, please refer your citizens to the actual Terms & Conditions which can be found at www.SLWofA.com.**

■ **If more than \$4,000 is required for repairs or public street cutting, does the resident cover the cost?**

In the rare case that the repair exceeds \$4,000 the resident will be responsible for the difference. SLWA works very closely

with its local contractors to avoid this situation and in the unlikely event this should occur, the customer enjoys pricing that would not otherwise be available from the contractor. **Please note – if your city has special coverage situations, please refer your citizens to the actual Terms & Conditions which can be found at www.SLWofA.com.**

■ **I cannot find my Terms and Conditions. How can I get another copy?**

You may either call SLWA at 1-866-922-9006 to request another copy or visit www.SLWofA.com and follow the navigation prompts under “Manage Account” to log in. Once logged-in, select “View Terms & Conditions” from the home screen. The warranty product(s) that are active on your account will be displayed. Once you make your selection, your Terms & Conditions will display as a .pdf. You can print or save them at this time in addition to viewing them online.

Eligible Dwelling Types

■ **Is the program just for residents, or can businesses participate?**

This program is only available for residential dwellings.

■ **I live in a condominium. Am I responsible for my water or sewer line?**

Please contact your homeowners association to determine if you are personally responsible for your water or sewer service line. If you are responsible and you have a single service line serving your dwelling, you are eligible to enroll. If you are served by a shared line, please contact SLWA at 1-866-922-9006 to determine eligibility.

■ **Can my condominium association enroll in this program?**

Yes. Because coverage issues can vary widely between associations, please call 1-866-922-9006 to speak with an employee who specializes in this custom coverage program.

Repairs

■ **What do I do if I need a repair?**

Simply call SLWA’s 24-hour hotline number at 1-866-922-9006 to speak with one of their claim representatives. There are no forms or paperwork for you to complete. Once you report a claim, their contractor must call you within an hour to schedule an onsite visit, which typically occurs within 24 hours, but on a rare occasion could take as much as 48 hours - including holidays and weekends.

The vast majority of repairs are completed within 1–2 days of receiving the claim. Claims taking longer than a day are those which usually require utility line marking to prevent accidental damage to other lines on the property. At the completion of your repair, you will be sent a satisfaction survey. Results of these surveys are used to continually improve SLWA service levels and processes. SLWA has consistently enjoyed a 96% customer satisfaction rating (excellent and good categories).

■ **What codes will SLWA adhere to? The current code? The original code at the time of installation?**

If the line is broken and leaking, SLWA will repair or replace the leaking portion of the line according to the current code.

■ **Who will do the repair work?**

SLWA only employs qualified contractors from the local area who have the desire and ability to meet the high standards established by SLWA.

Contractors

■ **How selective is SLWA when choosing contractors to conduct repairs?**

SLWA is very particular when it comes to selecting contractors into their network. SLWA’s objective is to provide the highest levels of customer service, and all SLWA contractors understand the importance of their role. SLWA works with local contractors that have both the desire and ability to meet their high customer service standards.

■ **How many plumbers is SLWA going to work with in my City?**

The number of plumbers depends on the number of households in the City. Generally, SLWA starts with a minimum of two contractors for the smallest cities, and adds one additional contractor for each 10,000 households of population.

■ What if the plumber does poor work?

SLWA screens local contractors to ensure that they have the desire and ability to meet the high standards established. All work is guaranteed for one year. Any work that fails to meet the warranty or quality standards will be re-performed by the contractor or another contractor at no cost to the homeowner.

Billing

■ How will I be billed?

The choice is yours. SLWA can invoice you monthly, charge your card or deduct the monthly amount automatically from your checking account. You can make payments monthly or annually.

■ Is this a long-term commitment?

No. The contract is monthly and you may cancel your warranty at any time. If you have prepaid your contract and decide to cancel before the end of the term, you will be refunded the unused portion of your premium.

■ Am I able to pay my bill online?

Yes. Simply login to SLWA's website at www.SLWofA.com and follow the navigation prompts under "Manage Account" to log in. Once logged-in, if you have already received an invoice, you can go online to pay your bill. Select "Make a Payment" from the home screen. You can choose to pay by credit card or bank draft, and you can choose to make a onetime payment or set your account up for recurring charges or drafts. You will receive an electronic receipt in your email after your transaction is complete. If you have not yet received your first invoice but would like to prepay on your warranty service, please call Customer Service at 1-866-922-9006 to assist you.

■ Can I set up recurring payments online?

Yes. Please visit www.SLWofA.com and follow the navigation prompts under "Manage Account" to log in. Once logged-in, select "Update Payment Method" from the home screen. You will select the warranty products that you want to set up on a recurring payment method on the next screen. Follow the prompts to choose your new payment method (you can choose between Recurring Credit Card, Recurring Bank Account Withdrawal, and if you are already set up on a recurring payment method, you can also switch back to Invoice) and to provide the details on that payment method. You will receive an electronic receipt in your email after your transaction is complete.

Additional Questions?

This document contains answers to the most commonly asked questions you may encounter regarding the National League of Cities Service Line Warranty Program introduction. However, rest assured that Utility Service Partners is available to assist you at any time. For assistance, simply call toll-free at 1-866-922-9006 or email us at Partnerships@utilitysp.net and we will be happy to help.