

Why I Added “Sewer Jetting” to My Gutter Cleaning Business

by Doug Rucker, Clean and Green Solutions and The Pressure Cleaning School

Gutter Cleaning is a very profitable business here in the Houston Texas area. Quite a few of our communities are built in areas where it seems like they saved every tree possible when developing the neighborhoods. The Woodlands and the Kingwood area are two such communities.

I recently received a phone call from a customer two weeks after we had cleaned his gutters out. He informed me that while he was extremely pleased with our gutter cleaning service, the gutters still seemed to be backing up when we received large amounts of rainfall.

After a return visit to the property, I discovered – after running water in one of the downspouts – that his underground drainage system was clogged up. All the gutter downspouts were connected to piping that went underground, and then fed to the street curb. These same pipes were connected to catch basins that were placed throughout the back yard in low lying areas. So not only were the gutters connected to the underground drainage system, but the back yard was connected as well. This meant that grass clippings, dirt and other debris could flow into and eventually clog the drainage pipes.

Another problem I discovered was that I could not find the release point at the street curb. The release point for these systems is usually always at the street curb, or for larger properties, at a location somewhere towards the rear of the property along the property line, a pond, lake, or even a ditch if the property has one. But somewhere there should always be an exposed pipe for the water to be able to release.

I explained to the customer that the drainage system would have to be “sewer jetted” to clear out all the debris, and also allow us to open up the release point. My only problem was that I did not have the

“sewer jet” equipment nor did I know how to price it. I informed the customer that I would get him a price and email him within 24 hours.

As I left the home, I began thinking about if I knew any plumbers, landscapers, etc, that I could call to sub out the job. I also thought that I’d really like to do it myself as I could see a lot of potential in this as an add-on service.

SO...I called Paul Kassander at www.powerwashstore.com to get some advice. Paul is someone I like running these type ideas by because not only is he one of the best distributors in our industry, he is also a pressure washing contractor. He does what we do, and is very familiar with the challenges and opportunities we run across – not to mention the equipment needed. Paul is also the type that will take your idea for a piece of equipment and work to make it better or more functional.

I explained to Paul what I was faced with and he suggested I purchase a “sewer jetter” hose and nozzles. He explained the whole process on the phone of how I could hook it to my small 4gpm cold-water machine and clear all the drainage pipes out myself. He also gave me the option of getting the equipment to hook to my 8gpm trailer rig, but I decided to



Photo of Root Ball Rucker pulled from the pool drainage pipes.

go with the 4 gpm system because I envisioned being able to do this without having to haul my trailer around. I could easily throw the small 4 gpm unit in the back of the truck and the sewer jetter hose and not waste gas hauling a trailer around for this service. Realizing the ease, the low cost to get into the service, as well as the possibilities for additional services and income – not to mention the fact that I knew I could pay for the equipment off this one job (I called the customer and gave him a price and scheduled the job before ordering) – I placed the order for the equipment.

Since ordering the sewer jetting hose, we have been able to help other customers with their drainage problems. Recently, one particular housewash job involved a pool deck cleaning. The pool deck had two 3-inch drains for rainwater and pool water to drain away from the pool deck to the back of the property at the fence line. While cleaning the pool deck, we noticed the water pooling around the drains. I was able to sell the customer on our jetting service and we were able to clear the drain lines after discovering that a 15 foot root ball had grown in the pipes about the midway point between the drains and the outlet.

The outlet was also buried in the dirt and we installed a back flow drain above grade level so that this would not happen again. (Big thanks to Rodney Brown who was attending my pressure cleaning school for this suggestion.) The customer was extremely pleased with our service – he had tried unsuccessfully for years to get the drainage to flow properly – and even wrote a great review on Angie's List for us.

Oh, and I also used the hose to unclog my own kitchen drain pipe that clogged one day. Saved me money over calling a plumber. I must add though that I would never use this to unclog plumbing pipes in a house and always recommend a plumber for that. Most areas you have to be a licensed plumber to do this and our insurance would not cover any damage if we caused it.

There are many opportunities for this add-on service that we can perform though. Clearing underground drainage, heavily impacted downspouts, and pool drainage pipes are just some of the possibilities.

Doug Rucker owns Clean and Green Solutions in Kingwood, Texas, and is the founder of the Pressure Cleaning School, www.PressureCleaningSchool.com



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