

# Sewer flooding advice.



# Putting things right.

## What we'll do

We know how unpleasant sewer flooding can be and we want to make sure you can get back to normal as quickly as possible.

If our sewers have caused your property to flood, we'll clean up the affected areas free of charge.

We aim to begin the clean-up on the same day, but have to wait for the water to recede before we start for our work to be effective. Please be aware that weather conditions can have an impact on our response time – we'll try and keep you fully updated on what's happening.

## Our clean-up includes:

- litter picking
- washing down affected areas
- pumping out basements
- disinfection.

## Keeping you safe

**Your safety is important to us, please remember to:**

- keep children and pets away from flooded areas
- wash yours and your children's hands frequently
- wear protective clothing, such as rubber gloves if you are cleaning
- throw away any food which may have been in contact with flood water
- if you show symptoms such as diarrhoea or vomiting after a flood, call your doctor straight away.

## Your outdoor areas

If an outdoor area is flooded by sewage, to keep you safe and to allow for any bacteria to be killed, we recommend you keep off it for:

- 9 days if it's warm and dry
- 20 days when it's damp and cool
- 25 days when it's wet and cold.

## Your drinking water

Your drinking water should be safe to use because the pipes that carry it are sealed and under pressure, meaning they will force out clean water and not let anything in – even if there’s a leak.

If you have any concerns or questions about your drinking water, please get in touch.

## Cleaning your home

Here are a few useful tips to help should you decide to clean your property yourself:

- use food-safe disinfectant to wash down kitchen work surfaces and storage areas
- don’t rake or dig outdoor areas as this can slow down the process of bacteria dying off
- leave soil used for growing crops unused for 12 months
- disinfectant can be used on hard surfaces such as paths, patios, decking and furniture but it can also kill plants and grass

- if you’ve been flooded inside, using a low-level heater and opening the windows can speed up the drying process, but should only be done after the water has receded
- don’t use petrol or diesel generators or similar equipment indoors as exhaust fumes are dangerous.

## Sandbags and barriers

Sandbags and flood barriers are used to protect our pumps and sewer treatment sites from floodwater, which then helps to minimise the impact of flooding on homes and properties. We don’t usually give them out to individuals, but we’ll always assess each situation.

## Sewer flooding causes

There are many different causes of sewer flooding, including:

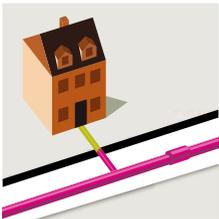
- climate change
- population increase
- grassed areas being paved over
- fat, grease and other food products being poured down the sink
- wet wipes, nappies or other sanitary products being flushed down the toilet
- surface and groundwater infiltration, despite efforts to reduce this by relining sewers

- some urban areas have combined sewers. These may take away rainwater as well as waste, rather than a separate network of pipes.

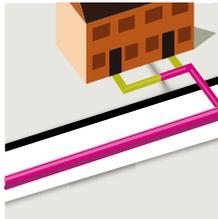
These factors increase pressure on the network and mean they reach capacity, especially during heavy rainfall periods, which can then cause them to overflow.

Find out how you can help keep your sewers clear from blockages by visiting [thameswater.co.uk/binit](https://www.thameswater.co.uk/binit).

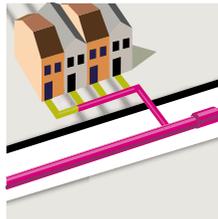
## Who owns your sewer?



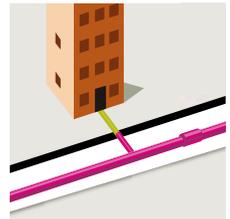
Detached



Semi-detached



Terraced



Flats

 Public sewer/drain – responsibility of the water and sewerage company

 Privately owned – responsibility of the property owner

 Property boundary

## What we promise

Sewer flooding isn't a nice experience for anyone and we want to make sure you're fully supported.

If you're a household customer and the inside of your home has been flooded with wastewater from our sewers, we'll automatically credit your account with your annual wastewater service charge (from £150 - £1000) under our Customer Guarantee Scheme.

If it's the outside of your property that's flooded with wastewater from our sewers and you've suffered damage, financial loss or loss of amenity, you can claim half of your annual wastewater service charge (from £75 - £500). Visit [thameswater.co.uk](https://www.thameswater.co.uk) for our Customer Guarantee Scheme claims form or call us on **0800 316 9800**.

If you're a business customer, your retailer will credit your account. Please get in touch with them to find out more information on their policies as well as payment amounts.

## Contacting your insurance provider

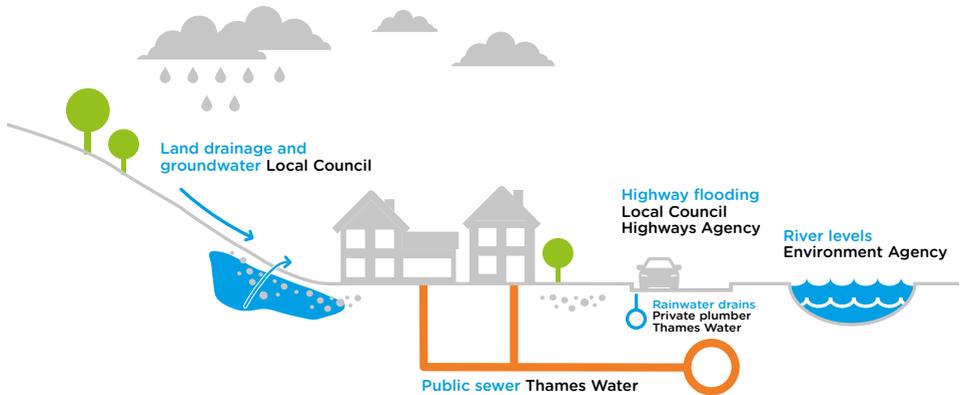
It's important to contact your buildings insurance providers to let them know about any damage caused by the flooding. They may be able to help you get a more comprehensive clean-up for your home or other services to help you get back to normal as quickly as possible.

## Our next steps

If we can't find a cause of the flooding when we first visit your property, we'll continue to carry out investigations. We'll make sure we update you and let you know how we're going to put things right.



# Who's responsible for what?



## Who can help?

We want to make sure you can get in contact with the right people to get help as soon as possible.

## Public sewer

To report sewer flooding, please call us on **0800 316 9800**. Alternatively, you can contact us online using Facebook or Twitter.

## Highway flooding

To report a problem with flooding from roads, gullies or ditches contact your Local Council or Highways Team.

## Land drainage or groundwater

To report groundwater property flooding and flooding from roads, please contact your Local Council and insurance company.

## River flooding

If rivers have burst their banks and it's affecting you, contact the Environment Agency on **0800 807 060**.

## Rainwater drains

If your rainwater drains are blocked or overflowing, contact a plumber to get these cleared. If your rainwater drains are overflowing with sewage then they'll be connected to a combined sewer drain, in which case you should contact us on Facebook or Twitter or call us on **0800 316 9800**.

## Find out more

To find out more information, visit our website at [thameswater.co.uk](http://thameswater.co.uk) or find us on Twitter and Facebook from the details below.



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