

# Building over or close to a public sewer



# Building over or close to a Public Sewer

Thames Water is responsible for maintaining public sewers, which are sometimes located within the boundaries of properties. You must get our agreement to carry out any building work over the top of or within 3 metres of a public sewer to ensure that no damage is caused to it or restrictions made to the way we use and maintain the sewer.

We need to know about any building work near or over a public sewer in order to:

- Prevent the sewer collapsing. The extra weight of a new building above a sewer could cause the sewer to collapse, resulting in structural damage to the new building, interrupted drainage from other properties and wastewater flooding. In these instances the sewer will need to be repaired quickly and this may involve taking down the building.
- Ensure we have access to carry out maintenance and repairs.

Although responsibility for the control of building over public sewers rests with Local Authorities through the Building Regulations, the Authorities are required to consult us where building over a sewer might occur. It will usually help to speed up your Building Regulations application if we are already aware of your proposals.

## Locating a public sewer

You can find out whether there is a public sewer on your land by visiting the relevant Local Authority offices to inspect a copy of the sewer maps, or you can contact our Property Insight Team on 0118 925 1504 or fax 0118 923 6655/57 (Residential enquires), 0118 923 6652 (Commercial enquires) for this information.

## Build Over options

If you find that your plans could affect a public sewer, you should first consider one of the following options;

- Avoiding the sewer through modifications to your plans so that the buildings are at least 3 metres away from the sewer. This is often the easiest and cheapest option.
- Diverting the sewer. If your plans cannot be modified, we will usually require the sewer to be diverted. In most cases we will have to carry out the work but at your expense. We are happy to give you an estimate of the cost of the diversion, before any work commences. Please contact us on 0845 850 2777, if you wish to discuss this option.

**Under no circumstance will you be allowed to construct directly over a manhole or pressurised pumping main.**

## The Build Over Process

If, having considered the alternatives your only option is to apply to build over a public sewer, you should make an application to us on the attached form. In some circumstances, we may allow you to build over a sewer, subject to the sewer being in satisfactory condition and our written Agreement to do this before you start work.

For all classes, **except class 1 domestic**, we will need to carry out a Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) survey before you begin work to ascertain whether any repair work is required (You will not usually be charged for any necessary repair.) Another survey is required when your building is completed, to check that the sewer has not been damaged. If you have not obtained our agreement, in certain circumstances, we have the right to discontinue your works and the buildings erected over the public sewer may need to be taken down. We would encourage you to get in touch with us early on in the design process to avoid any abortive costs, delays or other problems.

We will not permit building over on new developments.

Some minor public sewers serving a number of houses, often run along the back of older properties. As these may not show up on the sewer maps it is important that you contact us at an early stage if you suspect that a public sewer could be present. This will enable us to discuss and agree with you any necessary steps required to avoid problems in the future.

## Sewers often referred to as Section 24 sewers

Minor sewers serving a number of houses often run along the back of older properties. These could be public sewers and are not usually shown on the sewer maps, but they are commonly affected by rear extensions. Sewers often referred to as Section 24 sewers, are common in properties built before 1 October 1937 (in certain boroughs this is applicable for properties constructed prior to 1 April 1965). It is important that you contact us at an early stage if you suspect a Section 24 sewer could be present.

## Our Charges

We make a charge for every build over application. The level of charge will depend on the size of the sewer to be surveyed and whether a detailed investigation is necessary. In some cases, where major "strategic" sewers are involved, a formal legal Agreement will be required. The next page provides guidance notes to assist you in the completion of the application form.

# Guidance Notes

Please read these **Guidance Notes** carefully before completing the attached form.  
Each section in these notes refers to the same in the application form.

**A** - Details of the person making the application to whom all written correspondence will be sent.

**B** - Details of the owner(s) of the freehold must be provided, as they will need to be a party to any Agreement. Please continue on a separate sheet if there is more than one owner/leaseholder.

**C1** - Full Postal Address of the property.

**C2, C3 and C4** - If different from C1, please provide site contact details.

**C5** - Drawings clearly indicating the position of the building relative to the sewer should be included with your application. A location plan indicating the position of the building work relative to site boundaries, highways and other identifiable features is also required. Please note, drawings submitted for Building Regulations consent are usually sufficient.

**D1** - It will help us to speed up your application if you can provide details of your Building Regulations application. Please note, a Building Over Sewer application is in addition to, not instead of, a Building Regulations application.

**D2** - Under which Council/Borough does the site address fall.

**D3** - If you have already made the Building Regulations application, these details will help us to contact the correct person at the Local Authority.

**E1** - The size of the sewer can be retrieved from the sewer maps.

**E2 and E3** - The date of construction of your property and whether it was formerly a Council House may help to determine whether a Building Over Sewer Agreement is necessary.

**E4** - You will need to complete a Sewer Connection application form, if you want to connect to the sewer. Please telephone our Contact Centre on 0845 850 2777, to request a form.

**E5** - One copy of our Building Over Sewer Agreement must be signed and dated by the owner of the property and returned with this application. Not applicable to Class 1 Domestic Extensions.

**F** - In order for the build over request to be processed, it is important for the correct fees to be enclosed with the application form.

The current fees for Building Over/Close to a Public Sewer application are:

**Class I:** Sewer up to 160 mm (6") diameter (Domestic Extensions) **£343**

**Class I:** Sewer up to 160 mm (6") diameter (Commercial/ Industrial/ New build) **£687**

**Class II:** Sewer 160 mm (6") to 375 mm (15") diameter inclusive **£687**

**Class III:** Sewer Over 375 mm (15") diameter **£1,300**.

Actual costs will be charged for class 111 sewers, however a minimum deposit of **£1,300** will be required with this application. **Any additional costs incurred by Thames Water will be invoiced accordingly.** The above costs are zero rated for VAT.

If you wish to pay by credit card, please indicate this by providing a contact name and telephone number. Should you select this option, one of our advisers will call you, on receipt of your application to process your payment request.

**G** - Any incomplete application form received will not be processed but returned to customer until all relevant documentation is received by Thames Water. In most circumstances for class 1 sewer applications we are able to give you a decision within 14 days of receipt of a complete application form. We will also ensure the Building Regulations Department of the appropriate Council or Borough is kept informed of progress.

**Before submitting this application, we recommend that you look at ways of modifying your proposals with a view to minimizing the impact on the public sewer, as permission to build over is not always guaranteed.**

**On completion, please return the full application form to; Thames Water, Developer Services, Reading Bridge House, Reading Bridge, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 8PR**

# Application to build over/close to a public sewer

Please read pages 1 and 2 before completing this form.

Please complete all sections of this form in BLOCK CAPITALS

## A. Applicant's details (in full)

Title	<input type="text"/>	Surname	<input type="text"/>
Forename	<input type="text"/>	Your address	<input type="text"/>
Name/Company	<input type="text"/>		
Tel no.	<input type="text"/>		
Mobile no.	<input type="text"/>		
Fax no.	<input type="text"/>	Postcode	<input type="text"/>
e-mail	<input type="text"/>		

## B. Owner's details (if different from section A - please ensure that you supply details of all owners)

Title	<input type="text"/>	Surname	<input type="text"/>
Forename	<input type="text"/>	Address	<input type="text"/>
Tel no.	<input type="text"/>		
Mobile no.	<input type="text"/>		
Fax no.	<input type="text"/>	Postcode	<input type="text"/>

## C. Site details

C1 Site address	<input type="text"/>
	Postcode <input type="text"/>
C2 Site/project name	<input type="text"/>
C3 Site agent's name	<input type="text"/>
C4 Site phone no.	<input type="text"/>

## C5 Plan details

Two copies of the following information should accompany your application form:

- 1 Site location plan @ 1:1250
- 2 Site plan @ 1:100 or larger, showing location of sewer and manholes
- 3 Sectional plan of buildings
- 4 Section through building indicating position of sewer relative to structure
- 5 Copies of drawings submitted for Building Regulations approval

## D. Development details

**D1 Type of development**  New building  Side extension  Rear extension  Basement

**D2 Local Authority area**

**D3 Have you applied for building regulation approval?**  Yes  No

If yes, please state the Local Authority Reference number

Local Authority/Approved Inspector contact name  Date of Application/Notice

## E. Other details

**E1 Please indicate size of sewer**

**E2 Approximate date of construction of original/existing property**

**E3 Is the property an Ex Council House**  Yes  No  Unknown

**E4 Do you need to make a new connection to the sewer**  Yes  No

(If yes, you will need to contact us for a sewer connection form)

**E5 If we have included a Building Over Sewer Agreement with this application form, please return a signed copy of the agreement with your completed application form.**

## F. Fees/Charges (see guidance notes for definitions of Classes)

Please indicate which sewer class your application is for by ticking the appropriate box:

Class I: (Domestic) <b>£343</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Class II: <b>£687</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Class I: (Commercial) <b>£687</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Class III: <b>£1,300**</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

\*\* Actual costs will be charged for class III sewers, however a minimum deposit of £1,300 will be required with this application. Any additional costs incurred by Thames Water will be invoiced accordingly. Cheques should be made payable to Thames Water Utilities Limited with the site address written on the back.

If you wish to pay by Credit Card, please indicate your contact name and number here.

Card holder name  Telephone No.

## G. Checklist and declaration

Please ensure that you have included the following items with this application form:

1) Drawings      2) Appropriate fees      3) Signed agreement (where applicable)

Failure to include any of the above will be deemed as an incomplete application and result in the application being delayed or returned. No works should commence until approval has been granted. If the application is refused, all payments will be refunded. Any applications cancelled by the applicant will result in an £87 charge to cover abortive costs, however once consent has been granted no refund will be given. Please note by signing this application, you are not automatically granted approval.

I confirm to the best of my knowledge the above information to be complete and correct.

Signature

Name in BLOCK CAPITALS

Date

Thames Water Utilities Limited  
Registered in England and Wales No 2366661  
Registered office Clearwater Court,  
Vastern Road, Reading, RG1 8DB  
Part of the Thames Water Plc Group

# Getting in touch with us

For enquiries regarding this application or any other questions relating to your building or development work please contact us on:

**0845 850 2777**

Monday - Friday 8.00am-5.00pm

You can write to us at

Thames Water, Developer Services, Reading Bridge House, Reading Bridge, Reading, Berkshire RG1 8PR

Alternatively you can email us on [developer.services@thameswater.co.uk](mailto:developer.services@thameswater.co.uk) or visit our website address at [www.thameswater.co.uk/developerservices](http://www.thameswater.co.uk/developerservices)

**You can contact Thames Water 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.  
We record all our calls to ensure that we always give you a quality service.**

**0845 9200 888**

- Queries relating to your bill
- Change of address
- Meter readings

Minicom service if you are deaf or hard of hearing  
0845 7200 899

To contact us from abroad:  
+44 1793 366011

If you prefer you can write to us at:  
Thames Water PO Box 286  
Swindon SN38 2RA

Visit the Thames Water website at  
[www.thameswater.co.uk](http://www.thameswater.co.uk)

**0845 9200 800**

- For emergencies
- Other non-billing enquiries
- Literature

Minicom service if you are deaf or hard of hearing  
0845 7200 898

Have you any comments about this leaflet?

We will be happy to hear from you regarding this or any other matter where you feel our service to you could be improved.

**This leaflet can be supplied in braille or audio-tape upon request.**