



Planning Your Wastewater

Where can I discharge surface water?

The Code for Adoptions, Building Regulations Part H, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and (if you are in a London Borough) [The London Plan](#), all advise that your development should utilise sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) unless there are practical reasons for not doing so. You should aim to achieve greenfield run-off rates, even if existing connections exist, and ensure you manage surface water run-off as close to its source as possible in line with the following drainage [hierarchy](#)¹ (or the relevant version for your location):

- a) surface water runoff is collected for use;**
- b) discharge into the ground via infiltration;**
- c) discharge to a watercourse or other surface water body;**
- d) discharge to a surface water sewer, highway drain or other drainage system, discharging to a watercourse or other surface water body;**
- e) discharge to a combined sewer.**

Surface water should not be discharged to foul sewers.

Please note that if you're discharging surface water anywhere other than to a public sewer, such as to a watercourse, you'll need approval from the relevant authority/owner.

If you don't follow the surface water hierarchy you may not be granted planning permission, or Thames Water may request conditions on the planning application.

There's no automatic right to discharge highway drainage into the public sewerage system, you can [contact us](#) to discuss this further if no other options are available.

What can I do about existing sewers and rising mains on my site?

On brownfield sites where existing sewers or rising mains need to be diverted, the developer will need to fund the work, as set out in [Section 185 of the Water Industry Act 1991](#). If there's no practical way of making a diversion, please refer to clause A11 of Water UK's '[Design and Construction Guidance](#)'. Protection zone widths are typically 3 metres either side of the centreline of the sewer consistent with our [Local Practice](#) on Sewer Easements.

Risk assessment for odour encroachment

Please see the information on this [link](#) if your proposed site is near one of our Sewer Treatment Works or Pumping Stations.

How long does it take to get consent to connect to a sewer?

When you're [applying for consent to connect to a sewer](#) under section 106 of the Water Industry Act 1991, you'll need to give us 21 days' notice.

I think I'll need to connect to a trunk sewer – is that possible?

Connecting directly to trunk sewers can be complex and dangerous, and we won't permit this at all in London. If you're considering a trunk sewer as a point of connection outside of London, please [contact us](#) as soon as possible to discuss. If there are no better options then we will use our powers under [section S107 of the Water Industry Act 1991](#) to deliver the connection on your behalf.

How do I manage trade effluent discharges?

You cannot discharge trade effluent to our sewers without a valid Trade Effluent Consent – doing this is an offence under [Section 109\(1\) of the Water Industry Act 1991](#). You can call our trade effluent team on 0203 577 9200 or send them an [email](#) to get help with trade effluent consents and ground water discharge permits.

¹ Clause C3.12 of the Sewerage Sector Guidance Appendix C – Design and Construction Guide (DCG)