



Guidelines for working near our water mains and sewers

Our developer services team have a critical role to play in planning and enabling housing growth and other major infrastructure projects.

But we also have a duty to protect the water mains and sewers for which we're responsible.

If you're a developer or another utility service, this document provides guidelines on the process you need to follow if you're considering working above or near our pipes or other structures.

Please be aware that causing damage to our water mains or sewers is an offence under Section 174 of the Water Industry Act.

If you've any queries, we can be contacted as follows:

- Email: developer.services@thameswater.co.uk
- Phone: 0800 009 3921 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm)
- Write to: Thames Water Developer Services, Clearwater Court, Vastern Road, Reading, Berkshire RG1 8DB

Overview of process

The process you need to follow is briefly summarised below:

- Find how close your work is to our water mains and/or sewers.
- Decide what applications you'll need to make to us.
- Apply to us for any services you need, and discuss your requirements with us.

If the local planning authority has imposed planning conditions on your site regarding Thames Water infrastructure, you'll then need to ensure you've submitted information to them to discharge these conditions before work starts.

How close is your work to our water mains or sewers?

It's vital that you request a map showing the location of our pipes. You can obtain this from our asset location search service, Thames Water Property Searches. We'll provide the information we have on the size, location, depth and direction of flow of our water mains and sewers. We'll include cover and invert levels where the data is available.

Water and sewerage services are shown on the same map, which includes a comprehensive key. Please note that our map will show records of our mains and sewers, but not all individual supply connections or lateral drains to properties.

You can order online from www.thameswater-propertysearches.co.uk, or by calling us on 0845 070 9148. Our lines are open from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday, except on bank holidays. We'll provide the maps and information in a PDF format within five working days. Please note

that we'll charge a fee for this, and that we can only provide data from within the Thames Water region.

Alternatively, you can view plans showing our mains and sewers at our office in Rose Kiln Court, Rose Kiln Lane, Reading RG2 0BY. If you'd like an appointment to do so, please email thameswaterhelpdesk@emcoruk.com.

Important notes

- We became responsible for additional sewers and drains, which were previously privately owned, from October 2011, and these may not yet be recorded on our public sewer map.
- We can't guarantee the accuracy of this information. We will assume you've had an on-site survey done, to check that the exact locations of pipes and manholes match those on our plans. If you've been unable to do this, or the results are inconclusive, please contact us to discuss this.

If a sewer is unmapped, you may be able to confirm its position using a range of topographical or underground survey techniques.

What applications do you need to complete?

Please compare our map to your construction plans to see how close your work will be to any water mains or sewers in and around your site.

There are six application processes:

- Building over or close to a sewer
- Building over or close to a water main
- Crossing a water main or sewer
- Diverting a water main
- Diverting a sewer
- Working near a water main or sewer

We've explained the various applications below, including who you'll need to contact, any fees that might be required, and how long it could take for us to deal with your application.

Please note that all the distances quoted are measured from the face of the pipe.

Building over or close to a sewer

If you intend to build over or within three metres of a sewer, you'll need to apply for a build over agreement. You can read our guidance notes here <http://thameswater.co.uk/tw/common/downloads/your-business-developer-services/BUILD-OVER.pdf> and apply here <https://www.thameswater.co.uk/developers>

If you intend to build near sewers with a diameter above 375mm, you may require an asset protection impact study to make sure it won't damage the sewer. Please see the list of common activities that require an impact study in the 'Working near a water main or sewer' section below.

Who to contact: We'll assign your case to a member of our Build Over team who'll be your sole point of contact and update you as necessary.

Fees: These vary according to the size of the sewer, and are summarised in the table below.

Build over class	Sewer diameter	Application cost	Response time
Class 1	Up to 160mm	Domestic extensions: £299-£343 Commercial, industrial or new build properties: £687	Build over agreement issued within 21 calendar days of receiving application.
Minor diversion	Up to 160mm	Residential: £687 plus £2,000 refundable cash bond	Minor diversion agreement issued within 28 calendar days of receiving application.
Class 2	From 161mm to 375mm inclusive	£687	Approval to begin building works issued within 28 calendar days of receiving application. Build over agreement issued within 28 calendar days of completion of works.
Class 3	Over 375mm	£1,300 minimum	Approval to begin building works issued within 28 calendar days of receiving application. Build over agreement issued within 28 calendar days of completion of works.

As noted in the table, Class 3 build over applications cost a minimum of £1,300. Additional fees may be needed in order to carry out surveys, and are calculated on a time-charged basis. There is also a legal fee involved in entering into an agreement for very large sewers, which is usually around £550.

Response time: The time taken to process a build over agreement depends on the size of the sewer and whether any post-construction surveys are needed. Timescales are summarised in the table above.

Please note that your work must not restrict or remove our ability to maintain, repair or replace sewers, even on private land. If it does, we could seek an injunction to remove the building and look to recover any related damages.

Building over or close to a water main

No development or structure should be built within five metres of trunk mains or within three metres of distribution mains. If you intend to do this, you'll need to apply for a diversion – please see the relevant section below.

If you're planning work in London and intend developing above any section of the Thames Water Ring Main or the Thames/Lee Tunnel, you'll need to discuss this with us. Please note that we won't divert any section of these structures.

You shouldn't carry out work at any of these locations until we have granted written permission.

Crossing a water main or sewer

If the infrastructure you're providing is crossing a water main or sewer, please contact us to discuss your plans. If there is insufficient distance between the two, we may require an impact study to be carried out.

Diverting a sewer

You can apply to divert an existing sewer here <https://www.thameswater.co.uk/developers>

In some cases, we will contact you to discuss your plans further – for example, if the sewer is near strategic national assets.

Who to contact: We'll assign your case to a team member who'll be your sole point of contact and update you as necessary.

Fees: The developer is responsible for the full cost of the works. An initial payment of £1,000 is needed to cover the cost of opening investigations and producing a budget estimate.

Response time: We'll review your application and respond within 14 calendar days of receiving the initial payment.

Diverting a water main

You can apply to divert an existing water main here <https://my.thameswater.co.uk/dynamic/cps/rde/xchg/corp/hs.xsl/18730.htm>

If the water main to be diverted has a diameter above 355mm, you may require an impact study, as not all mains can be diverted. For example, we're only able to divert certain sections of our trunk mains, and won't divert any section of the Thames Water Ring Main or the Thames/Lee Tunnel.

Who to contact: We'll assign your case to a team member who'll be your sole point of contact and update you as necessary.

Fees: We don't charge an application fee for providing a quote to divert a main. The cost of the work depends on a range of factors, including the location, size and length of the main. It also includes any traffic management fees applied by the local highway authority and/or Transport for London.

Response time: We will provide a quote within 28 calendar days. Please allow up to 10 days at the start of this period for us to contact you to arrange an initial site meeting. From the date of this meeting, we will agree with you a timescale in which we will lay and commission the diversion. Please note that the start date depends on input from other parties, such as the local authority and highway authority.

Working near a water main or sewer

It is important to read our notes on 'Guidance for working near our assets' if you're planning any of the following:

- Piling works within 15 metres of our pipes
- Major excavations
- Tunnelling
- Significant dewatering next to or above our pipes

If you intend to carry out any of work of this sort, please contact us. We will then discuss with you whether we need an asset protection impact study, to make sure there is likely to be no structural impact on our mains or sewers.

Activities likely to require a study include:

- Impact piling works within 15 metres of a water main or sewer, as measured from the face of our sewer to the face of the pile
- Non-impact piling works within three metres of a water main or sewer or 1.5 times the diameter of the pile (whichever is greater), as measured from the face of the sewer to the face of the pile
- Non-impact piling works within five metres of a trunk water main, as measured from the face of the sewer to the face of the pile
- Piling works or changing the loadings within the zone of influence around the pipeline, as defined by a line drawn upwards from the invert of the pipe at a 45 degree angle
- Transporting very heavy or abnormal loads across our water mains or sewers

Please note that all the distances quoted are measured from the face of our pipes. We also assume that you've had an on-site survey done, to check that the exact locations of pipes and manholes matches those on our plans. If you've been unable to do this, or the results are inconclusive, please contact us to discuss this.

If we believe your work could damage a pipe that may be vulnerable due to its age or material, we reserve the right to request an impact study. This is the case even if the work takes place outside the various distances described above (for example, even if it is more than three metres from a sewer). We'll tell you this when you first contact us about your planned work.

Who to contact: If an impact study is needed, please contact us. We'll assign your case to a team member who'll be your sole point of contact and update you as necessary.

Fees: We'll charge a fee to cover the time needed to review an asset protection impact study, monitor your works and/or provide operational assistance during your works. We'll calculate the fee after we establish the scope of your works and expected input needed. Please note that the final fee could be less or more than first advised, as we'll base it on the actual time spent.

Response time: We'll produce a preliminary investigation report within 15 calendar days of receiving your application and payment. We'll then review this with you and issue a 'letter of no further comment' within 14 calendar days.

Our complaints process: We're working hard to improve our customer service. If you feel that we've not delivered an appropriate level of service, please tell us so we can get your issue resolved.

Any disputes that can't be resolved by our individual team managers will be passed on to a senior manager who will be able to co-ordinate any discussions on more complex issues.

If you feel you haven't received a satisfactory outcome, please contact us in writing at Developer.Services@thameswater.co.uk , marking your email for the attention of our customer team. We'll reply within 10 working days, giving you the contact details of the case manager dealing with your complaint.

For more details on our customer quality scheme and our complaints process please visit:

<https://www.thameswater.co.uk/about-us/performance/customer-commitment>