



# Sewer connections

Guidance notes

## Guidance notes on connecting to a sewer under Sections 106/107, Water Industry Act 1991 (as amended by the Water Act 2003)

New sewer connections can be made directly to a public sewer or indirectly to a private drain that in turn discharges to a public sewer. Whether you're connecting directly, indirectly or seeking to relocate an existing manhole, you must complete an application form.

### 1. Types of sewer

Most of the sewer network is made up of local sewers, which are designed to take flows of sewage from properties such as residential buildings or retail units. Most connections should be made to local sewers as other sewers are primarily designed to help us manage wastewater flows in our network and aren't intended or designed for customer use.

Trunk sewers collect the flow of sewage from local sewers rather than individual properties or developments. Connecting directly to them can be complex and dangerous, which means we often refuse permission. You should only consider connections to trunk and other strategic sewers where no alternatives exist.

### 2. Right to discharge

The only exception to the above is if your property has existing consent to connect and you're not making any new direct connections. Existing consent to connect is defined by either:

- a consent letter that you or a previous property owner holds
- existing historical connections of the same type as the new flows you're seeking to discharge (foul, surface, or combined)

Your right to discharge will be invalid if you make a significant change, such as splitting a plot into two or constructing additional dwellings or building commercial facilities on what was previously residential land. In cases like this, you'll need to submit a new application. If you're not sure whether you need one, please get in touch and we'll advise you. You can find our contact details at the end of this document.

### 3. Direct connections

If you need to connect to a trunk or Class C sewer, we'll carry out the connection for you. As we take responsibility for the connection, you'll be responsible for the cost of the final connection work. In all other cases, you'll be able to make the connection by employing a competent groundworker to construct the connection pipework. The fee is £330 per connection point, which covers the cost of processing and technical review of the design and connection methodology as well as the cost of inspecting the works once they've been completed.

Connections to public sewers should be made via a manhole, a preformed junction or a plastic saddle unless an alternative method has been authorised. Direct connections to pumping or rising mains aren't permitted. You should plan to install an access chamber at the boundary of the property for maintenance purposes. The construction must be to the standard set in the latest Codes for Adoption, as published by WaterUK. [View these documents now.](#)

We'll need to inspect your work upon completion. To make sure that our engineer is available at a convenient time, please give us a minimum of 10 days' notice before the work is due to be completed. Don't cover up the works or backfill your trenches until the inspection has been completed and passed. If

you do, we may need you to re-excavate and expose the work at your cost so that we can inspect appropriately.

You must also comply with all other relevant legal requirements. For example, all works in the street must be in line with the New Roads and Street Works Act, and you'll be responsible for restoring the surface. You'll need to liaise directly with the highway authority about this. In addition, if your connection involves laying pipework in land owned by a third party, you'll need to obtain their permission before doing so.

#### 4. Indirect connections

If you're not connecting directly to the public sewer but are connecting to private drainage that discharges to a public sewer, you'll need to apply for an indirect connection. The fee is £110 per connection point, which covers the cost of processing, logging and reviewing your application.

We don't need to inspect any indirect connections. Once you've received your consent letter, you're able to undertake the work as specified within it. You'll maintain full responsibility for all private drainage.

#### 5. Manhole relocations

If you're moving an existing manhole on the public sewerage network from one location to another, you'll need to apply for a manhole relocation. The fee for manhole relocations is £330 per manhole, which covers the cost of processing and reviewing your application as well as the cost of inspecting the works once they've been completed.

The new manhole must be of the same construction type and materials as the replaced manhole and must meet the standards set in the latest Codes for Adoption.

#### 6. Further information

##### 6.1. Legislation

Legislation covering connections to public sewers is contained in Sections 106 to 109 of the Water Industry Act 1991 (the Act). Section 106 of the Act states that the owner or occupier of any premises may have his drains or private sewer communicate with the public sewers of a sewerage undertaker.

##### 6.2. Infrastructure charges

All properties connecting to the public sewer for the first time are subject to a sewerage infrastructure charge. This charge is in addition to the connection fees, but we invoice for it at a later date. [Read more now.](#)

##### 6.3. Asset information

Sewer records are publicly available at local authority offices. Alternatively, you can contact a commercial asset record provider to find this information for you.

Our Property Searches team can provide you with sewer records for a fee. To reach us, call 0845 070 9148, email [searches@thameswater.co.uk](mailto:searches@thameswater.co.uk) or write to Thames Water Utilities Ltd, PO Box 3189, Slough, SL1 4WW

##### 6.4. Minimum submission requirements

Any drawings you submit with your application should be in the scale range 1:100 to 1:500 and include a location plan and details showing the lowest floor levels relative to ground levels at the

proposed point of connection. When detailing private drainage, it's best to assume that the public sewer may surcharge up to ground level in certain circumstances. Please take care if your proposal includes basements or semi-basements or if your development will be in a low-lying area (eg near a river). You should consider protection against backflow in these cases.

You must show the number and position of all connections on the drawings, together with pipe sizes and connection design methods for each connection, as well as any existing public sewers. You'll need to be able to show us that you've received planning permission for your proposal.

The correct application details are essential for us to assess the methodology for each connection and make sure your methods will not have a negative impact on the sewerage system. Any missing information is likely to cause delays to your application as this will have to be sourced before processing.

### 6.5. Surface water and foul water connections

In accordance with the Act, foul water can't be connected to a surface water sewer and a surface water connection can't be connected to a foul water sewer without the consent of the sewerage undertaker. If your proposal includes a connection to a combined public sewer, you should separate the site drainage and only combine it at the final manhole nearest the boundary.

Permanent connections are not permitted for the removal of groundwater or land drainage. Internal backdrop connections are not permitted unless we expressly request it for operational reasons.

### 6.6. Trade effluent

You can't discharge non-domestic effluent until we've issued a valid trade effluent consent. If you discharge anything other than domestic sewage into public sewers without this consent, you'll have committed an offence and you'll be liable for the penalties in Section 118 of the Act.

For enquiries and application forms, contact your retailer or [visit our website](#).

### 6.7. Section 107

Under Section 107 of the Act, we may insist on carrying out the connection works for you. However, we'll only do so where there is valid operational or strategic reasoning, such as for trunk, chemical and/or man entry sewers. In most cases, we'll allow you to use a competent groundworker to make the connection to the sewer yourself. If we do insist on making the connection, we're entitled to recover all reasonable costs to deliver these works. Our current changing arrangement documents set out how we calculate these costs.

### 6.8. Issuing consent

We'll inform you of a decision within 21 days of receipt of a complete application. We may refuse a connection if the method or mode of construction or condition of the drain or private sewer doesn't satisfy the standards we reasonably require or if the works would be detrimental to the public sewer system.

### 6.9. Construction

Any contractor employed to work on the public sewerage system must be competent and suitably qualified in respect of current health and safety legislation. This includes certified personnel for confined working and all the necessary public indemnity insurances required. In

most cases, development sites will be subject to the requirements of the Construction Design and Management Regulations 1994 and will be appointed a Planning Supervisor. Sufficient evidence must accompany the application to satisfy us that these requirements have been met. We may inspect the work at the time of connection for auditing purposes.