

# INFORMATION ABOUT SEWERS AND DRAINS



## ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

'**DRAINS**' are the underground pipes that carry sewage and rainwater from a single property. They are private and belong to that property. They are the owner's responsibility. They can extend outside the property boundary and may pass under neighbouring land and the highway.

'**SEWERS**' are pipes that carry water and sewage from the drains of two or more properties.

'**PUBLIC SEWERS**' are owned and maintained direct by **Severn Trent Water Ltd.** (Council responsibility ceased on 31.03.2000). Public sewers are those sewers which have been built by or adopted by the Sewerage Undertaker (or its predecessor Authority) or were vested as public sewers prior to 1937. Most main public sewers are under public roads but they can cross private land. Houses built and drained to public sewers before 1937 may have minor public sewers close to them. Public sewers are shown on the public sewers record.

'**PRIVATE SEWERS**' are all sewers which are not public sewers. They are owned jointly by the owners of properties drained by those private sewers. Private sewers run from the house drains to the connection with the public sewer and include any connection pipework under the footpath and the road. The Council is not responsible for any private sewer (unless it owns some of the properties drained by that sewer).

The council has environmental health enforcement powers if owners of private drainage pipes fail to rectify problems (eg blockages). These powers allow the Council to serve a legal notice to require the pipe owners to rectify a problem, although this can be a slow procedure.

The Person Requesting the Emergency Service will be regarded as being the Owner or acting on behalf of the Owner(s) of the private sewer and drains. **The Council cannot charge any other person.**

**SEPARATE SEWERAGE SYSTEMS:** Most houses are drained by two separate pipes:

**Foul Water:** sewage and washing water from toilets, baths, showers, wash basins and washing machines goes to a pipe system that drains to a sewage treatment works:

**Surface Water:** most rainwater run-off from roofs, paved surfaces and roads goes by a pipe system to the nearest stream/watercourse. Wrong connections of foul water cause pollution and are illegal. The Council and Severn Trent Water Ltd investigate major pollution problems.

## COUNCIL CONTACTS FOR ASSISTANCE/ADVICE

Blockage Clearance Private Drainage:	Drainage Service Supervisor	(0121) 704 6530
Private Drainage Problems/Enquiries:	Environmental Health Officers	(0121) 704 6833
Other Technical Matters:	Engineers' Drainage Section	(0121) 704 6418

**SEVERN TRENT WATER LTD:                      Public Sewer Problems                      0800 783 4444**

# SOLIHULL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

## ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

### SERVICE FOR CLEARING BLOCKAGES IN PRIVATE SEWERS AND DRAINS

#### SERVICE DETAILS AND CONDITIONS

(Applying from 1/4/2010)

1. The Council offers a chargeable service to property owners/occupiers, to clear private blockages.
2. Severn Trent Water Ltd maintains all public sewers direct. The cost of clearing public sewer blockages is financed from their water charges. The Council's responsibility for public sewers ceased on 31.03.2000.
3. All connection pipes between properties and the public sewers are private, including pipes under the public highway. Connection pipes are the responsibility of the owners/occupiers of the properties drained. Unless Council Houses are affected, the Council has no responsibility for any connection pipes.
4. The initial service is limited to visual surface investigations and rodding of underground pipes, where there is adequate access for rodding. There is a fixed charge for the service: covering call-out and travelling time, up to approx 1 hour. A pressure jetting service is available, if warranted, at extra cost.

The Person Requesting the Emergency Service will be regarded as being the Owner or acting on behalf of the Owner(s) of the private sewer and drains. **The Council cannot charge any other person.**

Day: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Start Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of person requesting service: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Mr/Mrs/Miss) (Initials) (Surname)

Property Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Post code: \_\_\_\_\_

Address for Invoice (if different): \_\_\_\_\_

#### AGREEMENT BY PERSON REQUESTING SERVICE

I confirm that the details inserted on the lines above are correct. I request the Council to undertake investigations and rodding to clear a blockage affecting the property.

I accept the conditions of the Service. I understand I will be charged for investigation and work to clear a private sewer or drain and I will have to pay an invoice from the Council.

**I agree to pay Solihull MBC the sum of £126.90 (ie £108.00 + £18.90 VAT) for work to investigate/clear a blockage from a private sewer or drain. If the blockage cannot be cleared a call out charge of £38.18 (ie £32.50 + £5.68 VAT) will apply.**

Signed by Person Requesting the Service: \_\_\_\_\_

**I request the additional pressure jetting service and agree to pay Solihull MBC £76.37 (£65.00 + £11.37 VAT) per hour. This charge is in addition to the standard blockage clearance charges. If unable to clear a charge of £65.00 + VAT will apply.**

Signed by Person Requesting the Additional Service: \_\_\_\_\_

**SOLIHULL MBC – ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT  
REPORT ON INVESTIGATION AND CLEARANCE OF BLOCKAGES IN SEWERS AND DRAINS**

- A. INTRODUCTION** Start Job Time .....
1. Day and Date: ..... Start Time on Site: .....
  2. Property Address or location: .....
  3. Reason for Call out: .....  
 Problem Reported: PRIVATE PROPERTY / COUNCIL PROPERTY / IN HIGHWAY / OTHER
  4. Has reverse side been signed? **Manual rodding....[YES/NO] Jetting....[YES/NO]**
  5. If not signed, what reason? .....
  6. Is any Council property nearby affected? .....
  7. Is this a repeat visit within 14 days? YES/NO If yes, when previous? .....

- B. ASSESSMENT WHETHER PUBLIC SEWER BLOCKAGE**
1. AGE: Likely age of the property? BEFORE 1937 / AFTER 1937 / NOT KNOWN  
 Likely age of main sewer? BEFORE 1937 / AFTER 1937 / NOT KNOWN  
 Is any Service Main Pipe likely to be a Pre-1937 Public Sewer? YES / NO / MAYBE
  2. No of PROPERTIES to blockage point? Estimate No ..... (2 or more houses = sewer)
  3. BLOCKAGE IN: PRIVATE DRAIN / PRIVATE SEWER ..... OK, Carry On  
 Pre-1937 PUBLIC SEWER / MAIN SEWER ..... Stop Work)
    - If blockage in Public Sewer, advise Customer to Contact STWA Ltd on **0800 783 4444**: Done: ✓ / X
    - If not known, ask Customer again if wish to pay for Service: ✓ Contact STWA: ✓  
 Wait for Advice: ✓

- C. WORK REPORT**
1. System: Private FOUL WATER / SURFACE WATER or HIGHWAY or OTHER
  2. Was blockage cleared? YES / NO / OTHER Details if Other: .....
  3. Rodding from ..... Towards: .....
  4. Distance rodded ..... Direction: UPSTREAM / DOWNSTREAM
  5. Cause of Blockage: .....
  5. Other Comments: .....
  6. Time finished on site ..... Time taken on site: .....
  7. Signed: ..... Print Name: .....

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**D SUPERVISOR**  
 Job Type: PRIVATE / HIGHWAYS / OTHER / NO CHARGE / ABORTED JOB  
 Charge: PERSON REQUESTING SERVICE / HOUSING / HIGHWAYS / OTHER / NO CHARGE

SIGNED: ..... DATE .....  
 (Note: If Private Sewer or Drain is left blocked, Environmental Health Dept must be advised)

COMMENTS: