



Planning your wastewater

We've put together some information on sewerage to help you plan your new development.

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

If 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, please contact us as soon as possible to discuss.

How do I handle trade effluent and groundwater discharges?

You mustn't discharge non-domestic waste 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 to get help with trade effluent consents and ground water discharge permits.

Where can I discharge surface water?

The Lead Local Flood Authority, or if you are in a London Borough, 'The London Plan', advises 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 and ensure you manage surface water run-off as close to its source as possible in line with the following drainage hierarchy:

- 1 Store rainwater for later use.
- 2 Use infiltration techniques, such as porous surfaces in non-clay areas.
- 3 Attenuate rainwater in ponds or open water features for gradual release.
- 4 Attenuate rainwater by storing in tanks or sealed water features for gradual release.
- 5 Discharge rainwater direct to a watercourse.
- 6 Discharge rainwater to a surface water sewer or drain.
- 7 Discharge rainwater to a combined sewer.

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, for example the Environment Agency, the local authority or the Canals and Rivers Trust.

If you don't follow the surface water hierarchy you may not be granted planning permission, and Thames Water may seek to put conditions on the planning application.

There's no right of discharge of highway drainage into the public sewerage system, and we'd need to agree this with the relevant highway authority under Section 115 of the Water Industry Act 1991. You can contact us to discuss this further.

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

On brownfield sites where existing sewers or rising mains need to be made redundant or diverted, the developer will need to fund the work, as set out in Section 185 of the Water Industry Act. If there's no practical way of making a diversion, we'll apply the standoff distances in Sewers for Adoption 7th edition to assess the width of easement required.