

What should I do to help prevent sewer overflows?

- Only flush toilet paper down the toilet. Put other items in the garbage.
- Don't put food scraps, oil or cooking fats down the sink. These can solidify when they cool and cause blockages. Instead wipe pans with a paper towel and throw it in a bin.
- Don't bury sewer access pits (manholes) under gardens, driveways or lawns.
- Don't plant trees over the sewer pipes as the roots get in and cause blockages.

There are two important features on your property that you need to properly maintain to avoid sewer overflows:

Boundary Riser

This is an access point to your property's drainage system that allows you to inspect for and clear blockages. If you suspect a blockage, first locate your boundary riser (it looks like a plastic cap with a concrete surround) before contacting a licensed plumber. You or a licenced plumber should contact Shoalhaven Water if the blockage is found to be in our side of the sewer.

Yard Gully

A yard gully is one of the most important fixtures on your property. It will generally have a loose-grated metal or plastic removable lid to allow sewage to overflow if a blockage has occurred. This prevents sewage from flowing inside your house.

The gully opening should be at least 150mm above the ground to stop stormwater from entering the sewerage system. The gully should be a minimum of 150mm below any internal floors or from the lowest point to be drained. If you suspect it is not 150mm below the lowest point, contact a licenced plumber to check and install a one-way valve to stop sewage entering the house. These two measurements are important, one to prevent stormwater from entering the sewerage system and the other to provide enough protection against sewage overflows coming into your house.

Keep your gully clear of all objects and debris both on top and around so that it is easy to locate and remove the cap. You should not glue or fix the removable lid on the concrete surround.

For more information about your sewerage services visit our website www.shoalwater.nsw.gov.au or call us on **1300 66 22 46**



Your Sewerage Services

A guide to our responsibilities and yours



This brochure answers some of the frequently asked questions about your Sewerage Services including where the responsibility for repairs and maintenance starts and ends.

As a property owner it is your responsibility to maintain or repair all the pipes on your property.

Under many of the streets in the Shoalhaven there are two completely separate systems. One is the stormwater system which captures and distributes the rainwater from streets and roofs. The other is the sewerage system which collects waste water. Waste water from toilets, sinks, showers and washing machines is carried through the sewer mains to be treated at one of Shoalhaven Water's sewerage treatment plants.

Why do sewers overflow?

These two systems are designed to be separate. When stormwater gets into the sewerage system the extra water can overload the system leading to an overflow of diluted raw sewage that can pollute waterways and sometimes back up into streets and homes. Overflows can be prevented by reducing the risk

of stormwater entering the sewerage system. The most common causes of this are cracked or broken pipes and illegal connections to stormwater pipes. The other cause of overflows is blockages.

What are the signs of sewer blockage and cracked pipes?

- Toilets, basins, baths or tubs are slow to empty
- Toilets overflow or fill higher than usual
- Gully-traps in the yard overflow when the toilet is flushed or when basins or baths are released
- Sewer access pits overflow
- Gurgling noises occur in sanitary drains

What are the causes of sewer blockages?

- Rubbish, children's toys, tennis balls, nappies, clothing, sanitary pads/tampons, cooking waste, sand, and other wastes not suitable for flushing into the sewer system or putting down the drains
- Tree roots infiltrating the property pipes
- Pipes that have been crushed or flattened
- Pipes that have been laid poorly
- Illegal connection of stormwater pipes (for example roofing downpipes) causing overflow when it rains

Council responsibility
(Shoalhaven Water)
(02) 4429 3214

Your responsibility

Your responsibility

Council responsibility
(City Services & Operations)
(02) 4429 3111

