



Practical advice on how best to respond to wastewater flooding, including how to clean up safely and the help you can expect from **anglianwater**

[www.anglianwater.co.uk](http://www.anglianwater.co.uk)

**Wastewater flooding advice**

24-hour emergency: call 08457 145 145

Flooding from the public sewer (whether foul or surface water, internal or external) is something that we try very hard to prevent but unfortunately it can still happen.

### What causes flooding?

Sewers can easily become blocked if waste fat, oils and grease are poured down a sink, or if items such as disposable nappies, cotton buds or sanitary products are flushed down a toilet.


In addition, large amounts of rainwater going into the sewers from roofs, drives, paths and roads can result in the sewers overflowing and causing flooding of the surrounding area.

### Is the flooding affecting your property internal or external?

Flooding can be described as being:

**Internal** – where wastewater has entered your property through doorways, air bricks, cable ducts or other means;

**External** – where wastewater has flooded your garden, but has not entered your property.



**Important advice – contact your own insurance company.**

In all cases of wastewater flooding, we recommend that you contact your insurance company which will provide help and advice with making a claim.

# Who is responsible for the sewerage system?

The network of sewers and drains which takes wastewater away from your property are part-public and part-privately owned.

The large sewers, normally found under roads or pavements, are in most cases owned by Anglian Water. We maintain them and are responsible for clearing blockages and repairing bursts or collapses.

Most drains or sewers which carry wastewater and rainwater from your property to the point where it discharges into our sewer in the road are classed as 'private'. It is your responsibility to maintain them.

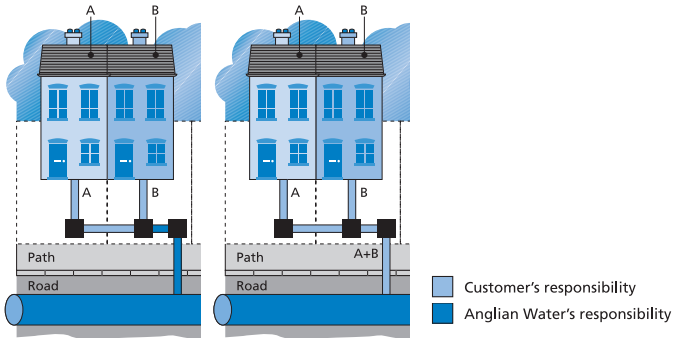
You may share a private sewer with one or more of your neighbours, in which case responsibility for maintenance is shared between you.

In some cases, for example, housing estates or in older parts of towns and villages, the whole network of sewers and drains is private and the responsibility for maintaining them is split between the owners of all the properties connected to that network.

## Who's responsible for what?

Before 1937

After 1937



In properties built **before** 1 October 1937, the sections in the diagram coloured light blue are the owner's responsibility (Pipes A and B); the sections in the diagram coloured dark blue are the owner's responsibility (Pipes A and B);

In properties built **after** 1 October 1937 the sections in the diagram coloured

light blue are the owner's responsibility (Pipes A and B plus the pipe which takes flows from A + B).

In the majority of cases, Anglian Water's responsibility on both diagrams is shown in dark blue. If in doubt, please call us on 08457 145 145.

# How Anglian Water can help

If your property has been affected, please call us immediately on our 24-hour contact centre line **08457 145 145**. We will contact you within four hours of being notified of internal flooding to decide the best course of action.

Our Service Standards Charter promises that, we will visit within four hours of being notified of internal flooding to investigate and decide the best course of action to start the clean up.

We will contact you on being notified of external wastewater flooding and discuss the best course of action to start the clean up with you.

**Please note:** Our response times don't apply if we are prevented from meeting

our standards by third party actions or exceptional circumstances, such as severe weather conditions.

For external flooding once the flooding has subsided, if requested, we can provide FREE assistance by:

- => Removing excess liquid and any solids left behind
- => Washing down and disinfecting the affected area.

The assistance we offer is given on a 'without prejudice' basis, which means we don't accept liability for the flooding at the time of the incident and we will carry out investigations to confirm the cause.

## Responsibilities of other agencies

**County councils** – Blocked highway drains and road gullies can sometimes cause surface water flooding. They are the responsibility of the Highways Authority. Your county council's Highways Department can provide a contact number and your district council can also provide contacts for your local Environmental Health Officer should you have further concerns.

**Environment Agency** – Advice and information on how to prepare for general flooding can be obtained from Floodline on **08459 881 188** or from the Floodline pack available from their website [www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk)

You can also obtain information from the National Flood Forum on [www.floodforum.org.uk](http://www.floodforum.org.uk)



## Cleaning up

### Internal flooding

Contact your own home insurance company as soon as possible; they should then initiate their professional disaster recovery agents to attend the property.

If you start to clean up, make sure you wear protective clothing, such as rubber gloves, and wash hands after exposure. Where disinfectant has been used, do not wipe down surfaces immediately as this will reduce its effectiveness.

Soft furnishings and any other items that are heavily soiled and/or damaged beyond repair should be placed outside to prevent the spread of bacteria. If you attempt to salvage soft furnishings, leave them to dry out, then vacuum.

**Please note:** Ensure loss adjusters appointed by your insurance company have completed their survey before disposing of any items.

Wash down all hard surfaces with a mild detergent/disinfectant, following manufacturers' instructions, several times until visibly clean. Food preparation surfaces (including the refrigerator) should be washed down with a food-safe disinfectant.

All crockery, pots and pans should be washed thoroughly in hot, soapy water. If any are chipped or damaged, discard them.

In all cases of wastewater flooding, we recommend that you contact your insurance company for help and advice to make a claim.

To assist your claim, make a list of all damaged goods, including food. Photographs and videos to illustrate damage sustained will be very useful.

Clothing, bedding and soft articles should be laundered on a hot wash (60°C and above). Items that cannot be washed in a machine need to be professionally cleaned or disposed of.

Allow everything to dry thoroughly – this will help destroy germs. Moderate, but not excessive, heating in conjunction with good ventilation can help the drying out process.

#### External Flooding

If requested, we will arrange for excess liquid and debris to be removed as soon as possible after the flooding has subsided.

Gardens and lawns should be left to allow ultra-violet rays in sunlight to destroy bacteria. The time it takes for bacterial contamination to return to normal levels will depend on the season and soil type, but the maximum period for levels to return to normal is one month.

You should avoid working in the garden during this period because disturbing the soil can prolong the process. Children and pets shouldn't be allowed onto the affected area. There is no need to remove soil or plants, although any food crops that have been soaked with wastewater should be destroyed. Paths and driveways should be washed down and disinfected.

## Your health and safety

If you come into contact with the flooded area during the clean up and disinfection process you should wash your hands thoroughly. Make sure you cover any cuts and wounds with a waterproof plaster.

Put contaminated food, including cans, into refuse sacks for disposal. Don't eat garden or allotment produce that has been contaminated.

Take particular care when preparing food. Always wash your hands and store open food in a sealed container.

If you feel unwell, accidentally swallow any contaminated material, or have any symptoms, such as diarrhoea or sickness after the flood, call your doctor immediately.

Ensure your property is well ventilated – but remember security! Do not use any gas or electrical appliances that may have been affected until a qualified gas fitter or electrician has checked them.



Clothing, bedding and soft articles should be laundered on a hot wash (60°C and above). Items that cannot be washed in a machine need to be professionally cleaned or disposed of.



# What happens after the clean up?

Our Service Standards Charter promises:

=> If flooding from the public sewer affects your property internally, we will automatically refund your sewerage bill for each internal flooding incident, this will be a minimum of £150 and up to a maximum of £1,000 for each incident.

=> If flooding from the public sewer affects your property externally, you may be entitled to claim 50 per cent of your annual sewerage charges from a minimum of £75, up to a maximum of £500. We will investigate the circumstances of the flooding and advise whether you are entitled to claim.

=> If asked, we will provide you with a letter of explanation about the cause of flooding within 10 working days. If we are carrying out an investigation into the sewer flooding that has affected you, we will keep you informed on our progress.

A payment made in accordance with our Service Standards Charter does not constitute an admission of responsibility for the flooding.

## What happens if you are unhappy with our service?

If you have any concerns about our response to wastewater flooding and want to discuss the situation, please contact our Customer Services Team which can arrange a further investigation and respond within 10 days.

Anglian Water, Customer Services  
PO Box 10642, Harlow CM20 9HA

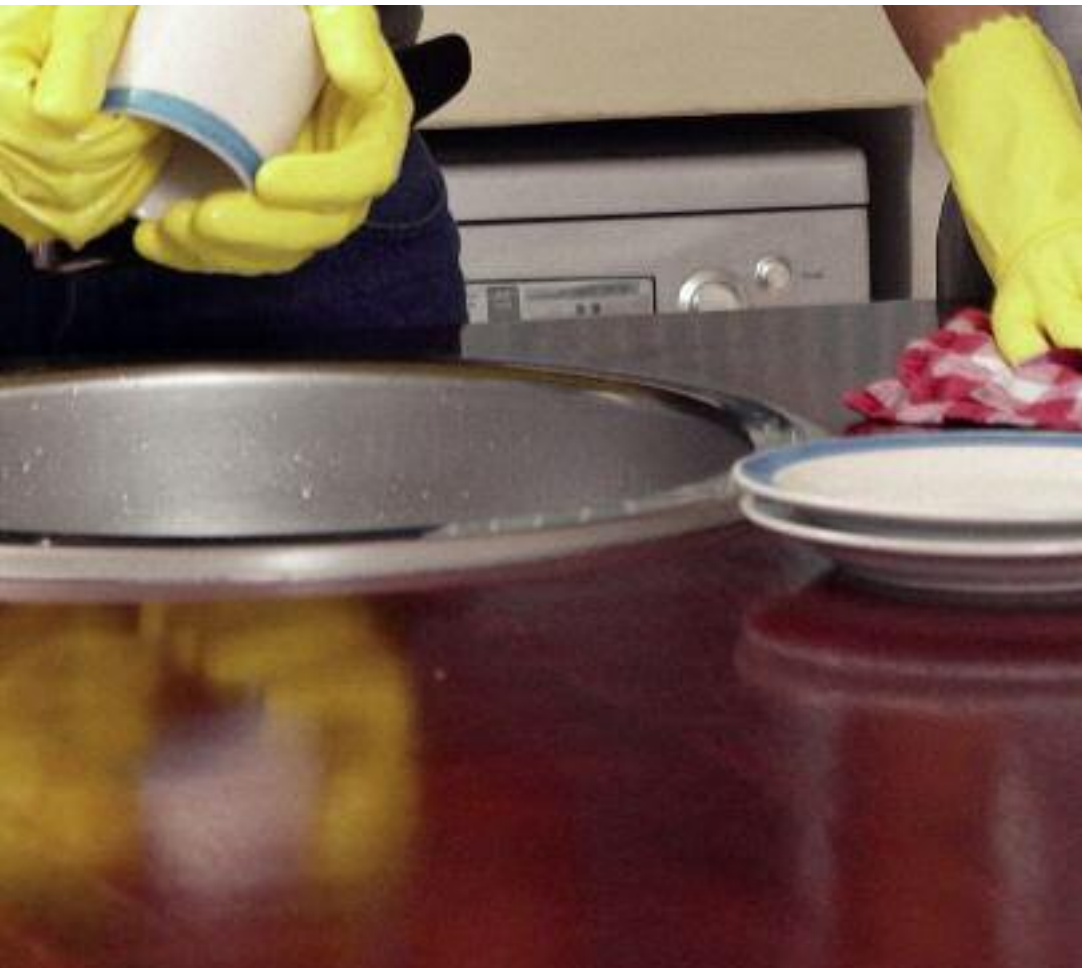
Telephone 08457 91 91 55  
Email [AnglianWaterCustomerServices@anglianwater.co.uk](mailto:AnglianWaterCustomerServices@anglianwater.co.uk)

## Independent help

Independent advice and help is also available from the Consumer Council for Water – Central and Eastern Region.

Consumer Council for Water  
Carlyle House, Carlyle Road,  
Cambridge CB4 3DN

Telephone 08457 95 93 69  
or 01223 323 889  
Email [eastern@ccwater.org.uk](mailto:eastern@ccwater.org.uk)



All crockery, pots and pans should be washed thoroughly in hot, soapy water. If any are chipped or damaged, discard them.



Want to know more about Anglian Water?  
Visit [www.anglianwater.co.uk](http://www.anglianwater.co.uk) to see the full range of our services.

Registered Office  
Anglian Water Services Limited  
Anglian House, Ambury Road  
Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire PE29 3NZ  
Tel 01480 323000 Fax 01480 323115

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