



Resourcing the world



## Sewer ownership

Keep me handy in case of EMERGENCY

## Sewer ownership

On 1st October 2011 the rules about who owns the sewers changed. Read on to find out what this means... and how to avoid stinky blockages and the costs of clearing them.



### So what's all the fuss about?

As you probably know, Veolia Water provides and maintains a system of public sewers that takes the wastewater from your private drains and sewers to our treatment works.

If there's a blockage in a sewer or wastewater pipe that's located on your property, it's now our responsibility to sort out the problem, and not yours.

### What's changed?

The Government changed the law, which meant water and sewerage companies would adopt all sewers and lateral drains connected to their sewer networks.

This means we are now responsible for looking after loads more sewers and pipes than we did, including a lot of the pipework that carries away the wastewater from your sinks, loos and guttering.

Most properties are connected to the public sewer system. If this is the case for you, any pipes you share with your neighbours now belong to us. The same applies to any pipes located beyond the boundary of your property, as long as it's connected to our public sewers.

But we aren't responsible for all the pipes you use for water and wastewater...

Within the boundary of your property, you will still own any pipes carrying wastewater away from your home only (this doesn't apply to pipes that you share with neighbours).

You'll also still own any pipes that don't connect to our system.

Have a good look at the diagram below, which shows who owns what now.



**Private pipes**

These pipes remain the responsibility of the homeowner.

**All change**

Now our responsibility.

**Public sewer**

These pipes are the responsibility of Veolia Water.

## Your questions answered

### The low-down

Here are some of the questions our customers have been asking about the change in law – we've done our best to answer them.

#### Why was the new law introduced?

To make life easier for customers, the Government is making the water and wastewater companies responsible for all shared sewers and lateral drains (a drain that isn't on the property).

#### So which bits did Veolia Water take on?

We now own any sections of sewers and wastewater pipes that you share with your neighbours, provided they are connected to the public sewers on our network.

We're also now responsible for pipes that are located outside the boundary of your property (if they connect to our network).

#### Does this affect my bill?

When the law changed in October 2011, our sewer network significantly increased. To help offset these costs there may be a small increase in the future.

#### Is there anything I can do to limit this increase?

We can all play a part, by doing all we can to keep our pipes flowing freely, rather than saddling ourselves with costly blockages. So don't pour unwanted fats, oils, grease or foodstuffs down your sink, and don't flush disposable wipes or sanitary products down your loo! These can cause serious blockages that are difficult and expensive to sort out. Play it safe, and put them in your bin!



## **I have a private pumping station, so what do I have to do?**

If you have a private pumping station, please ring our customer number 08451 482 909 to let us know. Under the new arrangements, from October 2011 shared pipes and sewers that are served by a private pumping station became owned by us. By October 2016 we'll have taken on responsibility for private pumping stations and rising mains too.

## **Does this mean you now own septic tanks, cesspits and private sewage treatment works too?**

No. And we're not responsible for the pipes that drain into them either.

## **Does this apply to business premises as well as residential premises?**

Yes.

## **If I have a blockage in my sink, loo or drain, what should I do?**

If you have home insurance covering your drains, you should contact your insurer and they'll advise you.

If a blockage is causing flooding or you think it is our responsibility, please call our Call Centre on 08451 482 909.

### **I've still got some questions**

If we haven't answered your query here, please call 08451 482 909.



## Here's a quick summary

### Top tips

Blockages are no fun for anyone – they can be very unpleasant, difficult and costly to fix, and they may also cause a flood, which could damage your property.

We can all do our bit to avoid blockages. Make sure that everyone in your household understands what they should be putting into the bin, rather than the sewer – and what could happen if they fail to do this.

### Be careful what you send round the u-bend

The only things that should be flushed down your loo are wee, poo, toilet paper and flush water!

### Don't cause a stink – only water down your sink

Never dispose of oil or other foodstuffs down the plughole or other drains – the only thing you should be putting down your sink is wastewater.

### Put waste in here, to keep pipes clear

In the bin, please; Fats, oils, greases and foodstuffs; sanitary products and wipes (even if it says on the label that you can flush them!)



## Telephone

Operations and billing enquiries:

**08451 482 909\***

Textphone: 01793 833272

Mon-Fri 8:30am-4:30pm

A 24 hour emergency service operates outside of these hours please call: 08451 482 909

\*Calls may be monitored or recorded for training purposes.

## Email

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