

GUIDANCE NOTES

Building over or close to a Public Sewer

March 2020

Guidance Notes -Building over or close to a Public Sewer

Veolia Water Projects Ltd (VWP) provides water and sewerage services to domestic and commercial customers in the Tidworth, Ludgershall and Perham Down areas. At Veolia Water we are responsible for maintaining hundreds of kilometres of public sewers to ensure the safe removal of wastewater from domestic and commercial property. These sewers are often within the property boundary and in some instances run close to or underneath buildings. Building work can affect our sewers and it is Veolia Water's responsibility to ensure that no damage is caused to them or restrictions placed on how we access and maintain them.

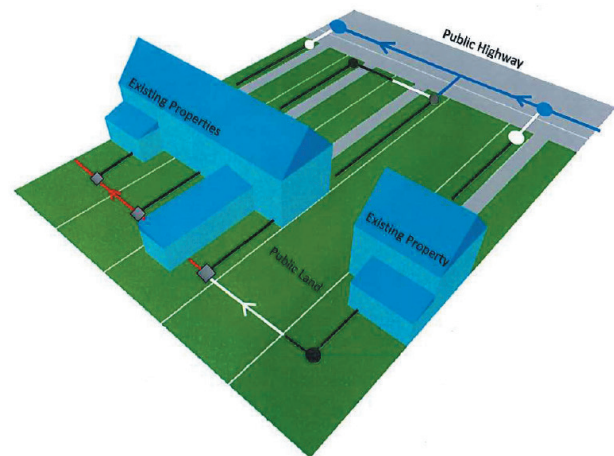
If you plan to build over, or within 3 metres of one of our sewer pipes or lateral drains, you'll need to let us know so that we can consider your proposal






This guidance deals with residential properties where a homeowner is planning to build an extension over or very close to small public sewers and lateral drains, with a maximum diameter of 375mm and 4m deep.

Questions and Answers

What is a public sewer?

A sewer is a pipe that serves more than one property. All sewer pipes (that connect to our network and were constructed before 1 July 2011) are now public sewers except where only one property is served by the existing pipe, which is known as a drain. A drain is privately owned and maintained to the property boundary by the home owner. Once it crosses the property boundary this pipe becomes our responsibility and is known as a public lateral drain.



-  Public Manhole
-  Private drain - the drainage system within your property boundary which only serves your property
-  Public lateral drain - the outside section of the drain which connects your property to the public sewer network and is located outside the boundary e.g. neighbours garden, the highway or other land
-  Public sewer- a wastewater pipe which Joins more than one property and is connected to the existing sewer network
-  Public sewer Network

What is a build over agreement?

A build over agreement is a Veolia Water seal of approval for the building work you plan to have carried out over or near a public sewer owned by us. Veolia Water Projects Ltd must have access to carry out sewer repairs and maintenance on its public sewers. Consequently, it is vital that we review your proposed building works to ensure that you have given the sewer the correct clearance from your new foundations and they do not obstruct our access to the sewers. It also gives certainty of this to anyone looking to buy your property, should you come to sell.

Why do I need the agreement of Veolia Water to build near a sewer?

Agreement must be sought from Veolia Water Projects Ltd before carrying out any building work directly over or within 3 meters of a public sewer. Unlawful development and buildings over or near public sewers may need to be taken down.

This is necessary as increasing the weight above a sewer by constructing a new building may cause the sewer to collapse. A collapsed sewer can cause structural damage to the new building or its foundation and may also interrupt drainage from surrounding properties. Should such a situation occur, the sewer would need to be repaired quickly and this may involve taking down the building(s) constructed above it.

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It is highly recommended that you contact us in the early stages of planning, regarding your proposed building works. These Guidance Notes provide you with guidelines for dealing with public sewers on your property and advises you how to avoid any problems or delays you may encounter when building over or near a public sewer. The consultation of the sewerage company is in Building Regulations 2010 Part H4. Building inspectors may ask to see a copy of your agreement before they will sign off your Completion Certificate.

How can you find out if there a public sewer on the land that might be affected by your proposed works?

Arrange to personally visit the Tidworth office to view the sewer plans between 9am and 4pm any working day. This access is free of charge, but charges will be levied for copies of plans at a cost of £15.00 per print. Alternatively, you can contact us for a copy of the sewer map for the property by writing to the address at the end of this guidance sheet. Please state property address as well as the address to which the plan should be sent and enclose a cheque for £35.00 payable to Veolia Water Projects Ltd.

Carrying out your own preliminary investigations well in advance of works commencing on-site can avoid any damage occurring to the sewer.

It will also help you determine whether you need to apply for formal approval to build within three metres of a Veolia Water public sewer or within one metre of a Veolia Water lateral drain.

Common methods used to locate sewers and drains are as follows:

- Lift the manhole cover and visually inspect the connections using a mirror and torch. Manhole covers are heavy and should not be lifted without the correct equipment or without assistance
- Use dye to determine the flow of effluent
- Rod the sewer or drain from the manhole or inspection chamber
- Carefully dig a trial hole or trench to locate the pipe.

If further advice is required, drawings or photographs of the drainage on-site can be sent to us.

You may also ask your builder to lift the nearest manhole, as you can often see which direction a sewer runs by looking at the invert channel. If the sewer is unmapped, then you can employ a local architect or engineer who can use a variety of methods to trace and locate sewers.

It is your responsibility to check and verify the invert levels and position of the public sewer prior to works on site.

How can you ensure that public sewer within the property do not affect the building proposals?

There are 2 options that you should consider:

1. Modify your plans to avoid the public sewer

This is often the easiest and cheapest option. We recommend you discuss this with your builder, keeping in mind that your proposed building should be at least three metres away from the sewer.

2. Divert the sewer

If your plans cannot be modified, the sewer may need to be diverted. Veolia Water Projects Ltd may be in a position to provide an estimate for the work, the cost of which will need to be met by you. To pursue this option please complete an application form for a S 185 sewer diversion and return to the address at the end of these guidance notes.

If you propose to divert the sewer yourself, All works must comply with the requirements of 'Sewers for Adoption' current edition. Please also be aware that:

- No additional loads are to be transmitted to the sewer by the proposed works
- Veolia Water Projects consent is subject to any conditions that may be imposed through the Building Regulation process
- More than four building over agreements in a row will not be permitted on a length of public sewer without an external manhole being available for suitable operation access.

What happens if Building over or within three metres of a public sewer appears to be the only option

If having already considered options 1) and 2) above you feel there is no other alternative, we may allow you to build over or within three metres of the public sewer This is subject to the sewer being in a satisfactory condition and Veolia Water Projects Ltd providing written Agreement to do this before you start work. For this you will need to submit a building over application to allow Veolia Water Projects Ltd to carry out the following checks:

- Review of application
- An assessment of the existing public sewer before any approval to begin work; this may include a closed circuit television (CCTV) survey, to check whether the sewer can be built over or if repair work is needed first
- A follow-up CCTV survey may also be required when you have completed the work, to check that construction work has not damaged the sewer.

If you have not obtained our agreement, in certain circumstances, we may seek that you discontinue your works and the buildings erected over the public sewer may need to be taken down. We would encourage you to get in touch with us early on in the design process to avoid any delays or other problems.

We charge a fee for every application to build over or near a public sewer. The level of charge will depend on the size of the sewer

Class 1 160mm diameter or smaller (domestic/commercial)

Class 2 160 -375mm diameter

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What happens if I do not apply?

You may not be able to obtain the required Building Regulations Completion Certificate that signs off your building as complete from the Local Authority. The absence of a Completion Certificate could cause problems when trying to sell your property in the future if a purchaser's solicitor advises a prospective purchaser that a building was extended over or near a sewer without the sewerage undertaker's permission.

I am not building over a public sewer, but I am still within three metres, do I still need to apply?

Yes, in accordance with Building Regulations Part H4. Even though you are not building over the sewer, your works will still have an impact on the sewer

I am not sure if I am building within three metres, what do I need to do?

Please send us a ground floor plan with the location of the sewer clearly plotted. This needs to include any manholes/inspection chambers and the direction of the flow.

When will building over or close to a public sewer not be allowed?

We will not agree to the following being built directly over:

- Pumping/Rising Mains
- Manholes
- Strategic Sewers.

If you are building a new house or extending an industrial or commercial premises we will not provide consent to build over or close to a public sewer or lateral drain. In this instance a sewer diversion would be required.

When would an agreement be refused? In some instances it may not be feasible to build over the sewer and we may require a diversion to be carried out. We may also refuse proposals if works are located in close proximity to a pressurised sewer (rising main) or if works do not comply with current edition of sewers for adoption.

Common reason for refusal are as follows:

- No plans submitted with application
- Plans submitted, but do not show the line of the sewer. We must see the position of the sewer and flow direction in relation to the existing buildings and the proposed building work
- No cross section drawing submitted. We require this drawing if building over or within 3.0m of the sewer, as we need to see how the foundations will be constructed. Cross section must show the foundation in relation to the sewer, with clearance marked and any bridging over detail specified
- Clay pipes being replaced with plastic. Pipes must be replaced 'like for like' e.g. clay must be replaced with clay
- Minimum clearance not achieved between the foundations and the pipe. See current edition of sewers for adoption

- Foundations not taken below the invert level of the sewer
- The sewer being surrounded in concrete. Pipes must be surrounded in pea shingle unless agreed otherwise
- Removal of a critical change of direction manhole
- Augured piles being used within 1.5m of the sewer or driven piles being used within 15m.

Can I build over a manhole?

No, we do not allow internal manholes due to the increased risk of internal flooding and odour issues, even if double sealed covers are used. Manholes must be completely removed and piped through manholes should be reconstructed outside of your extension, either on the line of the sewer or offset and connected by a Y junction. If your application shows an internal manhole it will be refused.

Can I start work before consent is received?

No, Veolia Water will assess your plans at the time of the application, if we need to agree amendments to your design then it is very difficult to do if your work has already started and this could cause delays on site. For sewers over 160mm in diameter a pre-construction survey must be carried out to identify the condition of the sewers.

Can I divert the sewer?

In some cases, sewer repairs or diversions are required, this may be possible under Section 185 of the Water Industry Act. In the case of minor sewers (Class I), we may allow your own contractor to carry out the works, subject to Veolia Water inspecting the completed works. In order to avoid delays for your builder, you may prefer to agree any relevant sewer works before submitting your plans to the Local Authority.

Will I need to have an inspection?

This depends on the size of the sewer. Class II sewers require a CCTV survey and inspection. Class I applications are inspected by the Building Control officer as part of their overall building control function.

How can I request an engineer to visit the site?

Please liaise with our technical team to confirm if a site visit is needed, as most issues can be resolved via email or over the phone. If a site visit is still required, then we will send a Field Engineer out to you within 5 working days. Our technical team can be contacted by calling Veolia Water Projects on (0345) 1482909 - Option 3

The sewer on my property drains waste from my property only. Do I still need a build over agreement?

When the private drain leaves the property, it becomes lateral drain. Hence if the proximity of your proposed building and lateral drain complies with the permitted conditions of current edition of Sewers for adoption then you don't need a build over agreement.

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What rights does Veolia Water have to stop my works?

Building without consent from Veolia Water may impose a risk on the public sewerage network.

Veolia Water has statutory powers, which gives us the right to maintain, repair, replace and renew public sewers on private land under Section 159-171 of the Water Industry Act 1991.

If any work restricts or removes the ability for Veolia Water to perform its statutory duties, we could seek an injunction for the removal of the building and we may look to recover any associated damages.

Application Fee

The application fee is as detailed on the Application Form.

What does the fee cover?

For small sewers (160mm and smaller)

The fee covers:

- Processing your application
- Technical reviews of your plans
- Discussing and agreeing any design changes proposals and add up to 2 iterations. Further changes and discussions will be charged at an hourly rate TBA
- Issuing your agreement
- Registering the agreement to build over or close to the public sewer on our records.

For mid-sized sewers (160-375mm) and commercial properties.

As above but with 2 CCTV surveys of the length of affected sewer. One before and one after your build.

How to make an application and completing the form?

The "Building Over" application form must be completed in full and sent to us with the required documents and fee. Please feel free to attach extra sheets with additional information.

Section E - if you need to connect to the sewer please complete a S106 application form and send it to the address at the end of these guidance notes.

Section F - sewer classes:

- Class I (Domestic) - sewer up to 160mm (6") diameter (domestic extensions)
- Class I (Commercial) - sewer up to 160mm(6") diameter (commercial/industrial/new build)
- Class II - sewer 160mm (6") to 375mm (15") diameter inclusive.

Check that you have supplied all the information required including the development plans. Please ensure that you sign and date the application. Completed applications and payment of the application fee should be returned to:

Veolia Water Projects Ltd

PO Box 3920

Swindon

Wiltshire

SN5 1BW

Please note any incomplete application will not be processed but returned to the sender. We aim to provide a written decision on all applications with 2 weeks.

Cheques should be made payable to Veolia Water Projects Limited.

Queries

If you have any queries completing the application form, you can contact us at:

Veolia Water Projects Ltd

PO Box 3920

Swindon

Wiltshire

SN5 1BW

Telephone: **(0345) 1482909 - Option 3**

Completion of work(s)

On completion of your (and our) works the map of public sewers is updated. In the future, should the property be put up for sale, solicitors will want to know (as part of the 'Searches' procedure) whether Veolia Water approved the work over/near to the sewer. Veolia Water will be responsible for the future repair and maintenance of the sewer. This does not include any costs of repairs to the property.

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Glossary of terms

Foul water drain/ sewer

A pipe that carries waste water from the property e.g toilet, bath, shower, dishwasher etc. Surface rain water should not be discharged into this pipe as it can cause foul water flooding.

Manhole

A large chamber which allows physical access by authorised personnel to the drain or sewer.

Inspection chamber

A small chamber to allow access to the sewer for jetting/rodding purposes.

Surface water drain/ sewer

A pipe that carries rainwater from the property e.g. from the roof, driveway, patio etc. Foul water must not be discharged into this pipe.

'Y' Junction

A pre-formed clay junction pipe used for new connections or when replacing manholes.

Property drain

Also known as a 'private drain'. A pipe which only serves one property and is contained within that property boundary.

Lateral drain

A pipe which only serves one property but is located in third party land. It is owned and maintained by Thames Water.

Rising main

A pressurised sewer which pumps foul or surface water. We will not permit building over a rising main.

Rodding eye

An alternative access point to the sewer which permits rodding in case of blockages.

Invert level

The level of the sewer or drain, measured from the inside of the bottom of the pipe.

Cover level

The measurement taken from the highest point of the manhole cover.

Soffits level

The highest point of the inside of the pipe.

Telephone

Operations and billing enquiries:

08451 482 909*

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

Billing: **tidworth.billing@veolia.com**

Operational: **tidworth.operations.vesuk@veolia.com**

Website

www.veoliawaterprojects.co.uk

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