Connexus

Blocked drains & sewage treatment

This page explains how to avoid blocked drains plus important info if your home's connected to a rural Sewage Treatment Plant.

Blocked drains

Many blocked drains are caused by incorrect items being disposed of in toilets, sinks, basins or bath wastepipes.

If we carry out a repair caused by incorrect items being disposed of in the drains, the cost of the work may be charged to the tenant, including any callout charges which may be incurred.

To avoid this happening to you, make sure the following items don't enter your drainage system as they will cause blockages:

- Baby wipes
- Drain and pipe cleaning solutions (e.g. Mr Muscle)
- Cotton buds
- Condoms and femidoms
- Tampons and tampon applicators
- Sanitary towels, panty liners and backing strips
- Facial and cleaning wipes

- Disposable nappies
- Incontinence pads
- Bandages
- Razor blades
- Syringes and needles
- Colostomy bags
- Medicines – take these to a pharmacist for disposal
- Home beer and winemaking products
- Any other items e.g. food, plastics, toilet roll tubes, tights etc.

Please also avoid disposing of the following items that pollute watercourses and result in environmental damage:

- Motor oil, paraffin, diesel, grease, anti-freeze, brake fluid etc.
- Cooking oil and fat
- Heating oil
- Weed-killers, insecticides, fungicides and other gardening chemicals
- Medicines – take these to a pharmacist for disposal
- Home beer and winemaking products
- Photographic developing fluids

Rural sewage treatment

Many of our rural homes are not directly connected to the main public sewer system. They may instead be connected to a local treatment plant or pumping station managed by the local water company, or connected to a private sewage treatment plant or pumping station owned and maintained by Connexus.

Our approach

We became responsible for the servicing and maintenance of the treatment plant and pumping stations as part of the transfer of homes from the local council when the Housing Association was created. We run this service to meet standards set by the Environment Agency and then we recover our costs from tenants and homeowners through annual service charges. If your property discharges to a pumping station, we recharge only the cost of running and maintaining the pumps and associated equipment, you will still receive a bill from Severn Trent for sewage treatment.

The sewage treatment systems we manage are designed to collect and treat biodegradable waste and do so very well.

Sewage treatment plants use colonies of live micro-organisms to break down the pollutants in the sewage, and the treated effluent then flows to a stream or soakaway. Many chemicals in the home can kill these micro-organisms, or stop them working. One of the symptoms of a damaged system is frequent blockages and unpleasant smells.

When the wrong substances are poured down drains it not only causes problems with the drains and sewage treatment system but can kill plant and fish life in our rivers. This can lead to those responsible for the pollution being prosecuted by the Environment Agency and facing large fines or even imprisonment.

You can safely put these down your drains:

- Toilet paper and human waste
- Household cleaning fluids
- Washing machine and dishwasher detergents
- Floor cleaners, disinfectants and bleach – these should be diluted first
- Nappy disinfectants and bottle sterilisers (e.g. Milton) should be diluted and is best flushed down the toilet

All common household cleaning products and chemicals are fine to use if you follow the maker's instructions and they are well diluted with water.

Our sewage treatment plants

The costs of running the sewage treatment plant and pumping stations are shared equally between all the connected properties. We aim to keep these costs as low as possible by carrying out regular maintenance to keep the plant running as it should. When we need to carry out additional visits to clear blockages or have to replace equipment that has been damaged by misuse, it is unfortunately necessary to pass these costs on, which leads to higher service charges for everyone. If we find evidence that the problems have been caused by individual households the costs will be recovered from those responsible in line with our Recharge Policy.

Look after your local sewage treatment plant; it's better for your household, better for the environment and better for your pocket.