



WAVERLEY  
COUNCIL

# Drain Blockage Guidelines

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Amendments	
Relevant strategic direction	
Relevant legislation/codes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Australian and New Zealand Standard 3500:2015*</li> <li>- Building code of Australia*</li> <li>- Plumbing Code of Australia*</li> <li>- (* and amendments)</li> </ul>
Related policies/documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Drain Blockage Policy 2003</li> <li>- Waverley Tree Management Policy</li> <li>- Waverley Tree Management Guidelines</li> </ul>
Related forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="http://www.sydneywater.com.au">www.sydneywater.com.au</a> Plumbing, building &amp; developing/wastewater blockages, New service on collapsed private wastewater pipes</li> <li>- <a href="http://www.sydneywater.com.au">General plumbing information (sydneywater.com.au)</a></li> <li>- <a href="http://www.sydneywater.com.au">Customer contract 2019-2023 (sydneywater.com.au)</a></li> </ul>

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## 1. Introduction/Background

Waverley Council provides and supports a variety of services, programs, and initiatives to sustain and improve the quality of life for the Waverley community.

The current Drain Blockage Policy was adopted by Council in August 2003 and commits Council to responsibilities and costs that are beyond Council's legal obligations.

In September 2017 Sydney Water released an updated regulation regarding the maintenance of private water and wastewater services (sewer) that connect to the Sydney Water network. The responsibilities of the individual property owner for the maintenance of these services were consistent with the previous version.

Discussions with Council's insurer, and knowledge of the practices of other Councils, indicates that the 2003 Drain Blockage Policy and the obligations on Council that it imposes, and resulting cost burden, is inconsistent with typical practice.

## 2. Scope/Purpose

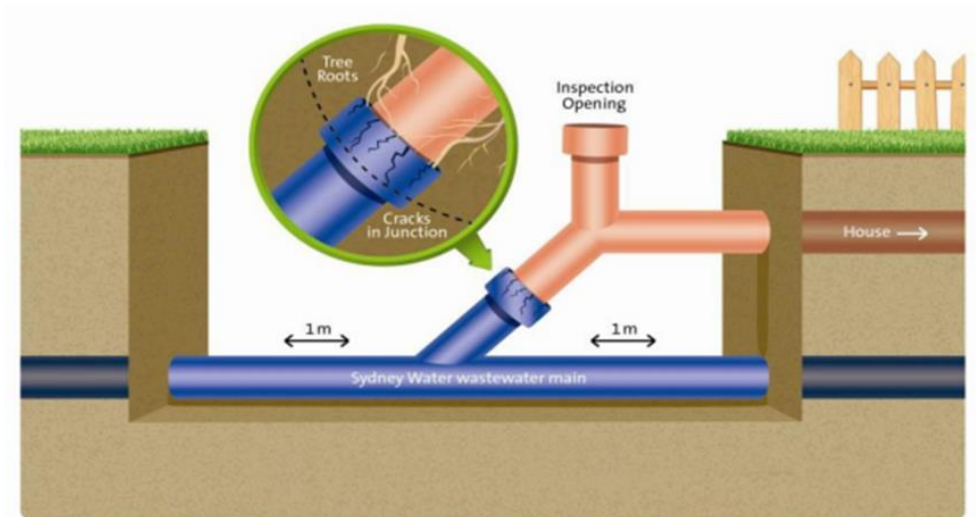
The purpose of this Guideline is to

- Explain to property owners the opportunistic nature of tree roots in penetrating pre-existing defects in privately owned service lines, particularly in old non-PVC pipes
- Help property owners understand their responsibilities in maintaining their own private service line to prevent blockages and damage to the environment by adhering to the relevant laws and rules set out in the Australian standards AS/NZ3500 and the Plumbing code of Australia (PCA)  
[https://infostore.saiglobal.com/en-au/Standards/AS-NZS-3500-1-2018-98883 SAIG AS AS 207942/](https://infostore.saiglobal.com/en-au/Standards/AS-NZS-3500-1-2018-98883_SAIG_AS_AS_207942/)
- Resolve issues and provide relevant information to property owners which will enable them to follow the correct procedures and repair faults in an orderly manner

## 3. Flow diagram

### Private wastewater services (sewer)

Private water and wastewater services start at the point of connection to Sydney Water's main. Sydney Water owns the main and the body of the junction, with the customer owning their private water and wastewater service up to and including the point of connection with the Sydney Water main.



The following link on the Sydney Water website has more in-depth diagrams of private water and wastewater connections/system types and maintenance responsibilities - <https://www.sydneypwater.com.au/your-home/moving-renovating-building/connections.html>

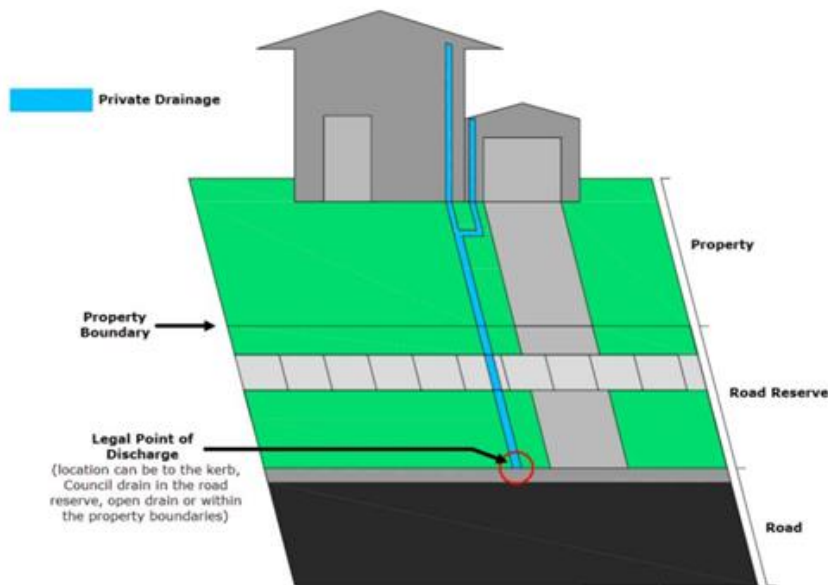
### Private water (stormwater)

Each property owner is allocated a location to dispose of stormwater from their property.

This discharge location is known as the Legal Point of Discharge (LPOD). These location points can be

- Discharging to a Council owned pipe/pit situated underground in the public domain
- Discharging to a Council owned pipe/pit located within private property and or
- Discharging to Council's street gutter via a kerb outlet

Any drainage issue past this point is Council's responsibility. All drainage infrastructure associated with the drainage of private properties is the responsibility of the property owner.



The owner is responsible for ensuring that stormwater pipes are connected to the nominated LPOD and that their stormwater runoff does not impact other property owners.

## 4. Guidelines

Cracked, faulty or damaged service lines allow tree roots and stormwater into the Sydney Water main service line, and untreated sewerage to soak into the soil.

The owner is responsible for maintaining their private water and wastewater service to prevent

- Sewer blockages
- Sewage escaping into the environment, and
- Unhealthy environmental conditions

If the owner has a blocked or overflowing private wastewater service, they are to engage a licenced plumber to assess the issue. If the licenced plumber determines that it is a Sydney Water-related issue, they are to contact the Sydney Water emergency repair line on contact number 13 20 90. If Sydney Water does not accept responsibility to undertake the work, it is the responsibility of the owner to engage the licenced plumber to clear any blockages.

If the owner believes that the cause of the blockage is a Council owned tree, they are advised to have their licenced plumber prepare and submit a written report. This report, with supporting evidence can be submitted to Council for further investigation.

Council has no obligation to clear private service lines, arrange or carry out CCTV inspections, dig up or replace any private service line, install inspection openings, or carry out any work on private property or private service lines.

Council recommends that owners experiencing blockages of their private water and wastewater service should consider upgrading their private service line to PVC, incorporating primed and glued solvent joints.

## 5. Roles & Responsibilities

5.1 This Guideline will be reviewed every 10 years or as required in the event of legislative changes or requirements.

5.2 Council staff and members of the public may provide feedback about this document by emailing [info@waverley.nsw.gov.au](mailto:info@waverley.nsw.gov.au)

## 6 Definitions

Term	Definition
<i>Owner</i>	Property owner/owners' corporation's authorised representative/managing agent's authorised representative of the property that the private service line connects to
<i>Private service line</i>	Sewer and drainage service lines located inside the owner's property
<i>Dig up</i>	The excavation and removal of dirt to expose private service lines
<i>CCTV Inspections</i>	The use of camera equipment inside service lines to identify pipe condition and faults
<i>Blockage</i>	An obstruction within a sewer and drainage service line
<i>PVC pipes</i>	Polyvinyl Chloride white plastic pipe
<i>LPOD</i>	Discharge location point allocated to dispose of stormwater from the property