



Roads and highways flooding (drains and gullies)

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A very important feature of road construction is drainage. New roads include designed drainage systems intended to remove water efficiently from the surface of the highway to provide a safe passage for all vehicles and pedestrians.

Older roads may have less sophisticated drainage, but all have features designed to take the water away from the road surface. It is necessary to clean and maintain these drainage provisions so they can work properly.

Problems can occur even when drainage provisions are clean and well maintained. Flooded and waterlogged roads result when the amount of water arriving on the road is greater than the capacity of the drainage facilities that take it away. Exceptional rainfall, a road being in a low lying area, changes in 'run off' from adjacent fields and rivers overflowing are some situations that can lead to the road flooding or being waterlogged even when drains are in good working order. Material carried into the drains by floods can also lead to them becoming blocked. Drainage grills and gratings (eg. on gullies) can become blocked very quickly when material, like mud, is deposited on the road or when there is a heavy fall of leaves. If a flooded road is caused by a ruptured water main the water company will be responsible for repairing the damage.

Water is directed to drains by the road profile. Puddles (ponding) tend to occur if there is a depression in the road. This can be rectified where necessary by local patching of the road surface.

The following notes give guidance on who to contact for various types of flooding:

Flooding from public sewers

The water company own and manage the network of public foul and surface water sewers. The majority of public sewers are located in highways and we have a copy of the sewer maps, which can be viewed at our offices. To report an overflowing public sewer, you should contact [Thames Water](#) for advice on 0800 316 9800.

Flooding from private sewers or drains

If your private drains or sewers are overflowing, you will need a drainage contractor to deal with any blockage. [Engineering Services](#) provide a 24 hour fee paying blockage clearance service. If you are uncertain if a blockage is in the public or private sewers contact [Thames Water](#) in the first instance as they should be able to determine this, once on site, then recharge you the cost of any work on the private sewers.

Flooding from the public highway

For flooding from the public highway or reporting blocked road gullies or gratings, contact [Hertfordshire County Council](#) for advice on 0300 123 4047.

Flooding from a water service pipe or internal pipework

This is the responsibility of the homeowner or landlord and would need the attention of a plumber.

Flooding from a main river

The main rivers are the responsibility of the Environment Agency, who can be contacted on 0845 933 3111. In addition, the agency provide 'Floodline', which is a 24 hour advice and information service for floods and flood warning on 0845 988 1188.

Flooding from watercourses, other than main rivers

Watercourses, other than main rivers, are the responsibility of riparian owners. You are a riparian owner if your property or land is on, or very near, a watercourse. As a riparian owner you have a duty to keep the watercourse clear of any obstruction to flow and we can serve legal notices on riparian owners to deal with obstructions. Certain 'strategic' watercourses, that are known to pose a high risk of property flooding if they become blocked, are checked and maintained by our contractor on a regular basis.

Provision of sandbags to protect against flooding

We make sandbags available to residents of the district, during emergency situations, to enable you to protect your homes from flooding. However, if you are aware that your home is at a high risk of flooding you are recommended to obtain sandbags from a builders' merchant to enable early preparation. At times of flooding, our contractor may not be able to reach all properties before flooding occurs.

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