



Sewage Smells Guide

WONDERFUL ON TAP

SEVERN
TRENT

Our Customer Guide

We have created this guide to provide you with support and guidance if you have any concerns about sewage smells in or around your property. We will outline our responsibility at Severn Trent and explain what we can do to support you with this issue.

Why could I be smelling sewage?

We understand that smelling sewage can be concerning and unpleasant but often it is nothing to worry about. Below is a bit of information about why you may be smelling sewage and what you can do to resolve it.

A smell in your home...

The smell is coming from inside my property – what is causing this?

If a smell is inside the property this could indicate a potential problem with the private internal waste pipes.

Examples of the potential causes could be:

1. Incorrectly installed domestic appliances like washing machines and dishwashers.
2. Infrequently used washing machines and dishwashers.
3. A problem with the traps on sinks, wash basins, baths and shower trays.
4. Incorrectly installed or faulty internal soil vent pipes.
5. An inspection chamber inside a conservatory or extension on a private drain.

Why is the smell, in my home, more noticeable at certain times of the day?

If the smell in your property is more noticeable at certain times of the day, specifically in the morning, this could often be caused by the loss of trap seal on things like shower trays and sinks can occur through the night or when not used for a long period of time.

We often notice the smells from these appliances first thing in the morning or last thing at night before going to bed as the time between uses can be around 14+hours.

What should I do to get rid of this smell?

Usual domestic products can be used, as advised by the manufacturer of your appliance. If the smell does not subside please contact a plumber they will be able to inspect your appliances to establish the root cause of the smell.

A smell outside of your home...

What do I do if the smell is outside my property?

If the smell is close or near to your property this indicates there could be an issue with a nearby sewer or drain – please contact us www.stwater.co.uk/help-and-contact/contact-us using web messenger, social media or get in touch by calling us on 0800 783 4444 and we will advise how we can best support you with this. Some more information on this process is detailed later on in this guide.

Please note: It is not always sewage you can smell, sometimes people have smelt rotten eggs. If you are smelling rotten eggs please contact us and we will look to carry out a further investigation at your home.

I think the smell is coming from a nearby sewage treatment site, what can I do?

At Severn Trent we pride ourselves in having high levels of sewage treatment. However, if you live near a sewage treatment site or a pumping station it is possible that these facilities can sometimes produce smells. Many of our sewage treatment sites have been around for many years but over time, due to population growth, houses are being built closer and closer to these sites. The site teams work hard to keep smells to a minimum and we have and are continuing to invest in odour reduction treatments and technologies. However sometimes, particularly during very hot summers and other unusual weather events these plants can smell more often. If you are smelling the local plant please [contact us](http://www.stwater.co.uk/help-and-contact/contact-us) www.stwater.co.uk/help-and-contact/contact-us and we will arrange for the site to be tested to make sure that it is operating properly.

I am not sure where the smell is coming from, how can I tell?

If you've noticed a sewage smell, there's a quick test you can do to work out where it's coming from:

1. Fill a glass with water from the tap where you've noticed the smell or taste of sewage.
2. Take that glass of water into another room in your home.
3. Smell the water again to check if it subsides

If it does subside, this would suggest that the smell is coming from a sink or drain, rather than the water itself. In that case you can use household drain cleaning products to clear or unblock the drain, which should solve the problem.

If the smell is still persistent in your water, then please contact us www.stwater.co.uk/help-and-contact/contact-us using web messenger, social media or get in touch by calling us on 0800 783 4444 and we will advise how we can best support you with this.

How do I know what a public sewer is (Severn Trent responsibility) and what private drains are (my responsibility)?

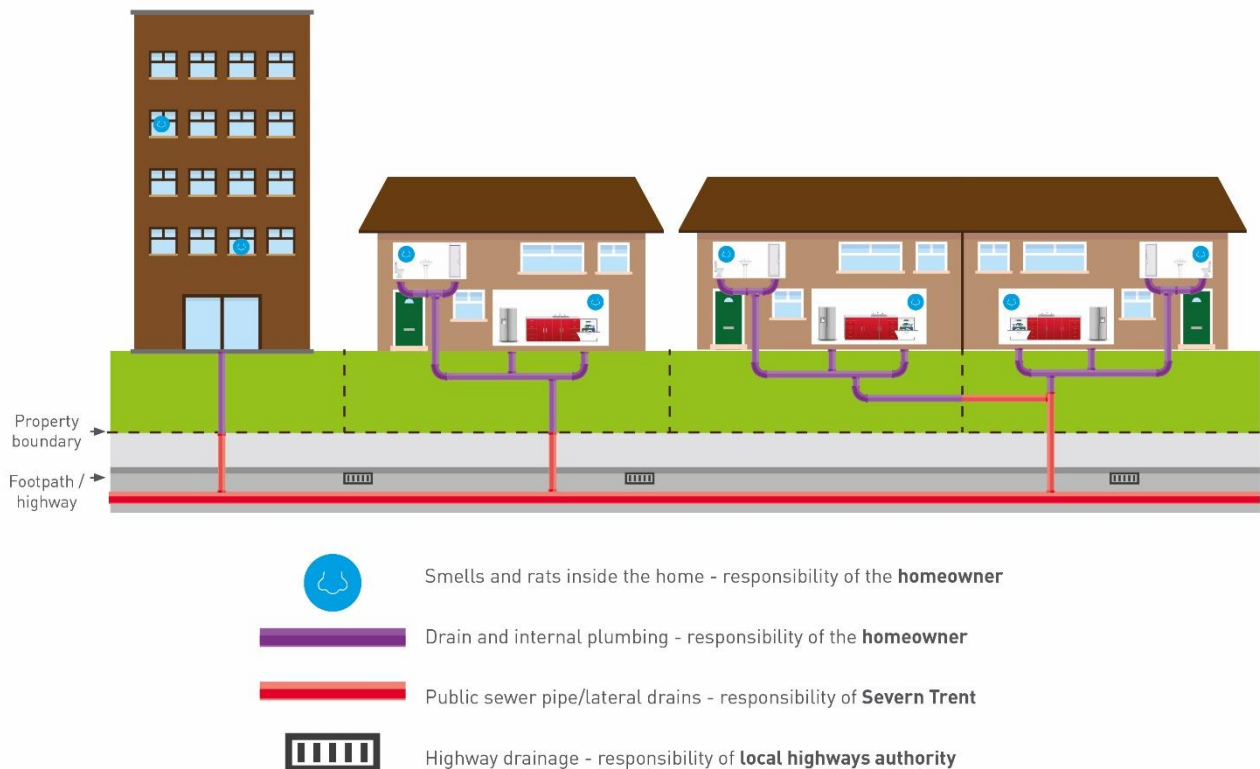
There are two main sewer types – private and public. You're responsible for private sewers and we cover the public ones. There are also highway drains and gullies that are the local authority's responsibility.

It's important to understand who's responsible for maintaining and repairing sewer pipes and drains especially if something goes wrong. If you would like detailed information about the pipes and sewers in your area you can request a sewer map from us by visiting our website www.stwater.co.uk/building-and-developing/estimators-and-maps/request-a-water-sewer-map.

Home-owner and waste user responsibility: The home owner is responsible for maintaining most sewer pipes in a property boundary, this is called your private drains. If you rent your home, your landlord or letting agent will be responsible for these pipes. **A private drain** supplies just one property and is within the boundary of the property. It is the responsibility of the homeowner to maintain these pipes and clear any blockages by instructing a plumber.

Water Company Responsibility: The sewers outside of your property boundary, for example under the road or footpath, are owned by us and we repair and maintain them, these are **public sewers**. We're also owners of most sections of the sewer pipes and drains that you share with your neighbours. However, if your home was built after 2011, shared pipes like these will be the responsibility of the home owner. Should any blockages or smells occur in these Severn Trent owned public sewers we will look to resolve these issues in the pipes.

Sewer pipe responsibility



I need to contact Severn Trent about the smell, what happens next?

Step 1: Contact and Guidance

If the smell is inside your home or coming from a sink, bathroom or drain, in nearly all cases this will be an issue with your private plumbing. In that case you can use household drain cleaning products to clear or unblock the drain, which should solve the problem. If it doesn't you will need to get a private plumber or drainage company to investigate.

If you contact us about a smell of sewage outside of your home, we'll help diagnose the cause of the smell. If necessary, we'll send one of our experts to check your drains or the local treatment site within 72 hours, free of charge.

Step 2: Visiting your property and diagnosing the issue

Once we are at your property and if we find that the issue is in a public drain then we will fix the issue, free of charge. If the engineers on site aren't able to resolve the cause of the smell then we will escalate this to a specialist team who will be in touch with you about next steps. We may ask you to keep a smell diary of the time and date of the smell and when it is worse. This way we can keep an eye on our network and make sure we can do everything possible to resolve the query for you.

If we find that it is an issue with your drains that is causing the smell such as a blockage, this would be your responsibility to fix. For more information please visit:

www.stwater.co.uk/content/dam/stw/my-water/document/sewer-terms-and-conditions.pdf

If you aren't at home when we attend your property to attempt to resolve the smell issue we will leave a calling card which will detail what steps we have taken to try and resolve this for you.

We know we don't always get it right. If we have previously advised you that it is a private issue which, on further investigation turns out is an issue with our public drains, please contact us www.stwater.co.uk/help-and-contact/contact-us using web messenger, social media or get in touch by calling us on 0800 783 4444 as soon as possible.

If you have instructed a local plumber, on our instruction, to clear a blockage and it turns out to be in a public drain please email us at customercare@severntrent.co.uk and attach a copy of your receipt and we will look to investigate this for you. If you are unable to email please contact us www.stwater.co.uk/help-and-contact/contact-us.

Please note, if you instruct a plumber to clear a blockage on public drain, before we have had the opportunity to go out inspect and investigate, we won't be able to refund you this cost.

We want all of our customers to have peace of mind when it comes to their water and waste services. We will work hard to ensure that our services run as smoothly as possible. However, we do ask that you make sure you have the right insurance to protect your pipes and drains. Your home insurer will be able to advise you of whether your private water pipes and drains are included in your insurance package.

Here at Severn Trent, we also want to provide you with support where we can, and understand that sometimes you or your family need long term support. We are able to offer you tailored support by assigning you to our [Priority Services Register \(PSR\)](http://www.stwater.co.uk/get-in-touch/join-our-priority-services-register) www.stwater.co.uk/get-in-touch/join-our-priority-services-register. This is a free service and means we can learn a bit more about you and help us understand your specific needs.

Our PSR is here to support all, whether you or your family member are facing ill-health, financial worries, language barriers or physical/psychological ill-health. We are here to try and provide some support to you and your family during that period.

To find out more, please contact us www.stwater.co.uk/help-and-contact/contact-us using web messenger, social media or get in touch by calling us on 0800 783 4444 and one of customer service representatives will be able to deal with any queries you have.

I have more questions about information in this guide, where should I go?

If you have further questions about the above guide, please contact us www.stwater.co.uk/help-and-contact/contact-us and someone will be able to support you with your query.