

How to Prevent



SEWER OVERFLOW

An overflowing (surcharging) sewer can be unpleasant. Anyone who has had that experience usually remembers it.

Overflows pollute waterways and sometimes back up into streets and homes. They are a serious source of pollution, a potential Health Risk, a nuisance to both the community and Council and can be very expensive to clean up.

That is the bad news. The good news is we can reduce the problem by stopping the stormwater from leaking into the sewerage system.

Council has already taken steps to prevent sewer overflows through the Waste Management Section preventative maintenance / inspection programs. Council has also adopted a Sewer Main Rehabilitation program where the sewer mains are surveyed by Close Circuit Television to identify potential problem areas for repairs.

That is why Hawkesbury City Council is committed to solving the problem. And that's why it's important for you to help by keeping storm-water out of the sewerage system on your property. You can be sure you are helping the environment and your community at the same time.

How does storm-water get in?



There are two ways for storm-water to get into the sewer system.



If sewer pipes are cracked or broken, rainwater which soaks into the ground will slowly seep into the pipes. These small cracks can be caused by tree's roots or movement in the pipes as the ground settles over many years. Because the cracks are below the ground they are very hard to detect.

The technical term for this source of storm-water is - "INFILTRATION"

The other way for storm-water to enter the sewerage system is through direct flow. It can be an illegal connection, for example when a roof downpipe leads into the sewerage system. Or it can be faulty plumbing.

Technically, this sort of problem is called - "INFLOW"

As a property owner, you are responsible for maintaining the pipes on your property so that storm-water does not leak into the sewerage system. Problems can be hard for you to see. If you suspect that you may have a stormwater to sewer issue contact Council and an inspection team will run a dye test into your stormwater downpipes to see if INFLOW is present in the sewer system. This is a fairly quick and no mess process.

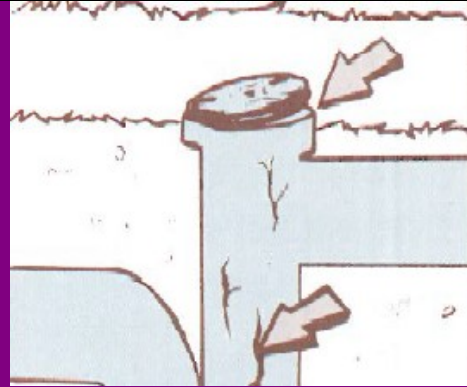
How can you help?

If the Council inspection team discovers a problem, you must promptly follow their directions to solve this. If you are in any doubt about your sewerage system pipework, contact a qualified plumber.

Here is a list of the most common problems;

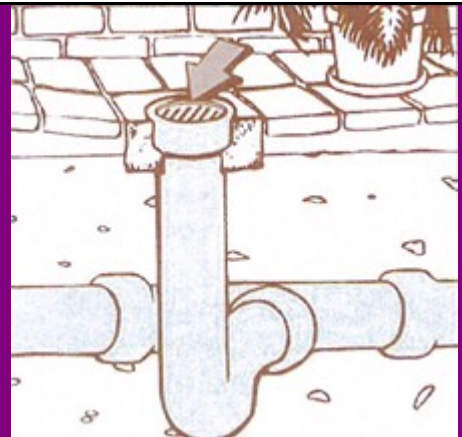
1. Inspection Shaft (I.O.) Boundary Trap

The inspection shaft / boundary trap is an inspection point in the sewerage system. If the lid is set below ground level, buried in a garden, and the lid and or concrete rim is damaged, storm-water can get in. There will also be a problem if the vertical riser is cracked, misaligned, broken, has tree roots entering. What you need to do is get a plumber to lift the I.O. lid to surface and repair any damaged pipework.



2. Low Lying Gullies

A gully is an open pipe which is covered by a grill and found just outside your building. It is there to release any backflow from blocked sewer pipes and makes sure raw sewage does not overflow inside the house. If the ground around the gully is built up too high, it can let storm-water into the sewerage system. What you need to do is get a plumber to lift the gully or lower the ground around it.



3. Cracked Pipes

Tree roots can invade even the smallest cracks in pipes. As roots grow, so does the size of the cracks. This lets in rainwater. Tree roots will also block (choke) the sewer pipes. Cracked sewer pipes have to be repaired by structural reline/patch, or replaced. What you need to do is get a plumber to replace damaged sections and consider removing the offending tree.



4. Direct Connection

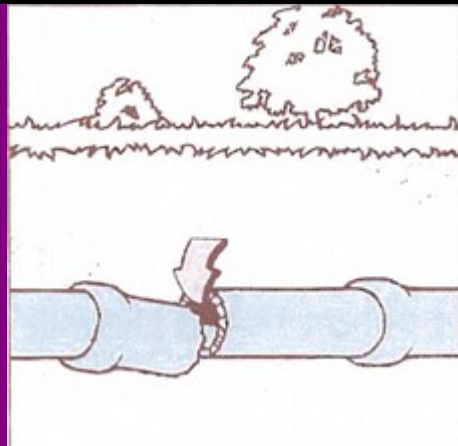
Stormwater down pipes are not allowed to be connected to the sewerage system. This would be referred to as an illegal connection. You need to make sure your storm-water downpipes are not connected to the gully, I.O. or drained to a sewer access chamber (manhole) on your property. All water from your property roof should be connected to the Council's stormwater system, if available or to the street.



5. Broken Pipes

Broken pipes can occur in both Council's and householders systems. Council inspects, maintains and repairs its system and property owners are responsible for sewer pipes and downpipes on their land. Broken sewer pipes not only let stormwater in, they can also allow untreated sewage to enter the soil and create unhealthy conditions. Major breaks can be seen when the ground sinks, and gets bigger after each rain event.

If you suspect broken pipes, call Council's customer service 02 4560 4444.



6. Access Chambers (manhole)

Do not bury, cover or conceal access chambers, these are essential points from where all major services and inspections are undertaken. They are also the place where blockages are cleared any time of day or night often without notice.

Buried, low lying, poorly fitting, cracked or broken lids can let water into the sewer system. If you notice any problems or odours from an access chamber please notify Council, telephone 02 4560 4444

