

Guidance notes: Applying for consent to connect to a public sewer



Please read these guidance notes carefully before completing the form. Each section refers to the equivalent section in the application form.

Under Section 106/107 of the Water Industry Act 1991 (as amended by the Water Act 2003), sewer connections can be made directly to a public sewer or indirectly to a private drain that in turn discharges to a public sewer. Where the public sewer to which you are connecting is situated within land owned by the applicant, we will not adopt the drain, and will therefore charge the lesser fee of £278.

Direct connections

We will only carry out the connection ourselves if you need to connect into a trunk or strategic sewer. In such cases, you will be responsible for the cost of the work. We will be responsible for all matters relating to the New Roads and Street Works Act and (if applicable) any serving of notices.

We will then take ownership of the pipe from the demarcation chamber to the public sewer. The property owner will be responsible for pipework from the demarcation chamber into the building.

In all other cases, you will need to construct the connection. Once it has been completed, we will take responsibility for the pipe between the existing public sewer and the demarcation chamber. The chamber should be as close to the highway boundary as possible.

The construction must be to a standard we accept. You will need to install a chamber at the boundary of the property for maintenance purposes. The materials used for the connection must be to the standard set in the latest edition of 'Sewers for Adoption', published by the Water Research Council (WRC) and the Thames Water Addendum, available at www.wrcplc.co.uk/sfa. We will not permit the use of plastic pipes within the public sewer or lateral drain, unless the plastic pipe can withstand 4,000 psi jetting pressure.

You must also comply with all relevant legal requirements. For example, all works in the street must be in line with the New Roads and Street Works Act, and you will be responsible for restoring the surface. You will need to liaise directly with the highway authority about this. In addition, please note that if your connection involves laying pipework in land owned by a third party, you will need to obtain their permission before doing so.

Connections to pipes should be made at a manhole or using a preformed junction unless an alternative method has been authorised. Direct connections to pumping mains are not permitted. If you elect to construct the direct connection yourself, the standard fee includes the technical vetting of the application, issue of a legal consent and inspections of the connection on site. On satisfactory completion we will issue a vesting certificate for the relevant pipe length(s) when the new connection is made.

Indirect connections

If you are not connecting directly to the public sewer (i.e. you are

connecting to private drainage that in turn discharges to a public sewer) you will only need to complete the sections of the form relating to indirect connection(s).

1. Legislation – Legislation covering connections to public sewers is contained in Sections 106 to Section 109 of the Water Industry Act 1991 (the Act). Section 106 of the Act provides that the owner or occupier of any premises may have his drains or private sewer communicate with the public sewers of a sewerage undertaker.

A request for Thames Water to construct a lateral drain will be considered as a requisition under section 98-101 of the Act 1991. Our charges for this are set out in 'Charging arrangements for new connection services', on our website..

Whether your connection is direct or indirect, you must complete an application form. It is a criminal offence to connect to the public sewerage system without our consent.

2. Infrastructure charges – All sewer connections that connect a property to the public sewer for the first time are subject to a sewerage infrastructure charge. This is in addition to the connection fees but will be invoiced at a later date.

3. Asset information – You can obtain sewer records information by inspecting the sewer maps at your local authority offices or from a property searches provider. Our own Property Searches team can be contacted via thameswater-propertysearches.co.uk or on 0845 070 9148 (9am to 5pm weekdays).

4. Applicant information requirements – Any drawings you submit with your application should be in the scale range **1:100** to **1:500** and include a location plan and details showing the lowest floor levels relative to ground levels at the proposed point of connection. When detailing the private drainage, applicants are advised to assume that the public sewer may surcharge up to ground level in certain circumstances. Particular care should be taken where proposals include basements or semi-basements, or where development is proposed in low-lying areas such as adjacent to rivers.

It is necessary to show the number and position of all connections on the drawings together with the details of pipe sizes and design flows for each connection, particularly for the surface water connections and/or on non-domestic sites. The existing sewer should also be shown on your drawing.

The application details are essential in order for us to assess the method of making each connection, with a view to ensuring such methods are not prejudicial to the sewerage system.

5. Surface water and foul water connections – In accordance with the Act foul water may not be connected to a surface water sewer and a surface water connection may not be connected to a foul water sewer without consent of the sewerage undertaker. Such a connection may only be permitted when a 'combined' public sewerage system exists.

If your proposal includes connection to a 'combined' public sewer, the site drainage should be separate and combined at the final manhole nearest the boundary.

Connections are not permitted for the removal of ground water. Backdrop connections are not permitted unless expressly requested by Thames Water for operational reasons.

6. Trade effluent – The discharge of non-domestic effluent is not permitted until Thames Water has issued a valid trade effluent consent. If anything other than domestic sewage is discharged into the public sewers without a trade effluent consent, an offence is committed and applicant will be liable to the penalties contained in Section 118 of the Act.

Applicants should contact our trade effluent team prior to seeking a connection approval, to discuss trade effluent consent and conditions of discharge. A trade effluent reference number should be obtained and included in the relevant box of the attached application form. You can call the team on 0203 577 9200, email them via wwqservicedesk@thameswater.co.uk, or write to Thames Water Process Quality Waste, Crossness Sewage Treatment Works, Belvedere Road, Abbey Wood, London SE12 9AQ. You can apply through the 'Trade effluent' section of our website.

7. Section 107 – We may insist on carrying out the waste connection under Section 107 of the Act, but will only do so where there is a valid operational or strategic reason. In most cases we will allow you to choose the option of making the connection to the sewer yourself.

8. Issuing consent – We will inform you of a consent decision within 21 days of receipt of a complete application. However, in cases where we consider that we should make the connection ourselves, we will let you know within 14 days of receipt of your application.

We may refuse a connection where the mode of construction or condition of the drain or private sewer to be connected to the public sewer is such that it does not satisfy the standards reasonably required by Thames Water or that undertaking the works will be detrimental to the public sewerage system

If the proposed connection is acceptable, we will issue consent. In some cases, this consent may be subject to adjustments to your proposals, for example, whether the connection is by junction or manhole.

9. Construction – It is a legal requirement that any contractor employed to work on the public sewerage system is competent and suitably qualified in respect of current health and safety legislation. This includes certified personnel in respect of confined working and all the necessary public indemnity insurances required.

In most cases, development sites will be subject to the requirements of the Construction Design and Management

Regulations 2015 and will have a Principal Contractor and a Principal Designer appointed. You must accompany the application with sufficient evidence to satisfy us that these requirements have been met. We may inspect the work at the time of connection for auditing purposes.

Under no circumstances must any person enter or connect to the public sewerage system without a Thames Water Operational Safety Authorisation (TWOSA). If the connection requires working within the highway, you will need to serve the appropriate notices on the local highway authority.