

Contaminated Surface Water

Removing Sewer Misconnections

Contaminated Surface Water is where **foul** connections are made incorrectly to the **surface water** system and so discharged directly to a water course with **no treatment**. Examples of this include:

- **Washing machines** plumbed into surface water grids
- Extensions where **bathrooms** are incorrectly connected to the surface water system
- Disposal of **cooking or engine oil** down surface water grids

Frequently asked questions

Houses built after 1920 generally connect to separate sewer systems.

Surface water - for clean rainwater from roofs and ground runoff.

Foul water - for dirty water from toilets, sinks, washing machines etc.

What is a misconnection?
A misconnection is where incorrect plumbing in your home causes wastewater from your dishwasher, washing machine, sink, bath and even your toilet to be flushed directly into your local stream, river or beach instead of to the sewage treatment works. The diagram above shows how your drains should look.

Why does the misconnection matter?
We need your help to keep our beautiful streams, rivers and beaches clean and healthy. Wastewater affects the local environment including the fish and plant life.

Who is responsible for correcting a misconnection?
You, as the owner of the property, are responsible for corrective work. If you rent the property then you should contact the landlord who may be the local council, housing association or a private landlord.

If you own your property, you will be responsible, even if the misconnection was made by a previous owner. You could try to contact the previous owner to see if they would be willing to accept responsibility. The survey undertaken at the time of your purchase would not have identified this problem unless you specifically asked for a full drainage survey.

Who do I need to contact to correct the drainage?
This depends on the fault that has been identified and the property survey sketch will give you an indication of what is required. You should seek advice from a reputable plumber and provide them with this information.

Will United Utilities do the work?
No, we are not able to undertake work on our customer's private drainage.

Will my building/drainage insurance rectify my misconnected drainage?
Not normally. Unfortunately, your insurance usually only covers blocked or defective sewers but you can contact them to check.

Where can I find out further information?
The ConnectRight website www.connectright.org.uk also provides guidance on what to check for and how to put right any misconnections.

You can also check unit@utilitea.com or www.connectright.org.uk or you can call us on 0345 672 3723.

United Utilities
helping life flow smoothly

Property report Misconnection

Do you know where it goes? **CONNECT CONNECT**

Customer name: _____ Customer contact number: _____

Address and postcode: _____

Name of homeowner (if not customer): _____ Misconnection contact number: _____

Watercourse affected: _____

Contact name at United Utilities: _____ Date: _____

We have been carrying out investigations into a pollution incident where wastewater (used water from a sink, bath, dishwasher, washing machine or toilet) has been flowing into a nearby watercourse.

During these investigations we have found that one of the pipes taking wastewater away from your home has been incorrectly plumbed into a drain which flows into this watercourse.

The diagram in this report shows where the problem is.

What you need to do next:
If you own the property you will be responsible for putting the problem right. We recommend that you pass the sketch of our findings on to a reputable plumber or drainage specialist to get the problem investigated and fixed.

It's a good idea to choose a member of an approved contractors' scheme, if you're not sure, you can go to watersafe.org.uk and type in your postcode to find your nearest plumber.

If you rent the property, you should contact the landlord, who will need to arrange for the misconnection to be sorted out.

What we will do next:
We will contact you again in 4 weeks time to see if you have completed the work.

What happens if you do nothing?
We will pass the findings of our investigation on to the local Environmental Health Department and the Environment Agency and as the homeowner, if you fail to fix the problem, they may take enforcement action against you.

How?

Contaminated outfalls identified by the **EA** are sampled and then assessed to identify connected properties. These properties are then visited by **United Utilities** network teams to assess their connections. If an issue is found the **property owner** is given a report which identifies what needs to be done. They are given 6 weeks to complete the repairs or the case is passed to **Environmental Health**.



CSW Dashboard												
Phase 1			Phase 2					Phase 3				
Desktop Surveys Completed	Catchments Confirmed by CST	Outfalls Sampled	Properties Surveyed	Unable to access	Misconnections Found	Letters Sent	Properties Completed	Remaining Properties	Remedial works completed	Properties handed over to EH	Phase 3 sample taken	Outfalls Signed-off by EA
82	73	79	7158	638	446	319	10170	19687	194	20	13	25

Indicator	Level Before Investigations	Level After Investigation
pH	7.21	7.98
Ammonia	1.57 mg/l	1.13 mg/l
BOD	117 mg/l	7.5 mg/l
COD	312 mg/l	12 mg/l
Phenols	0.322 mg/l	0.322 mg/l
Phosphates	2.42 mg/l	0.55 mg/l
SS	222 mg/l	13 mg/l
Detergents (anionic)	7 mg/l	0.2 mg/l

Results of samples before and after remedial action is taken on an outfall.
Red = Above Allowed limit, Green = Below allowed limit

The reduction in pollutants entering a water course that has been achieved by the interventions is significant. Whilst there are some substances which are still above the allowed limit every tested substance has either been substantially reduced or is in the within the allowable limit.

