

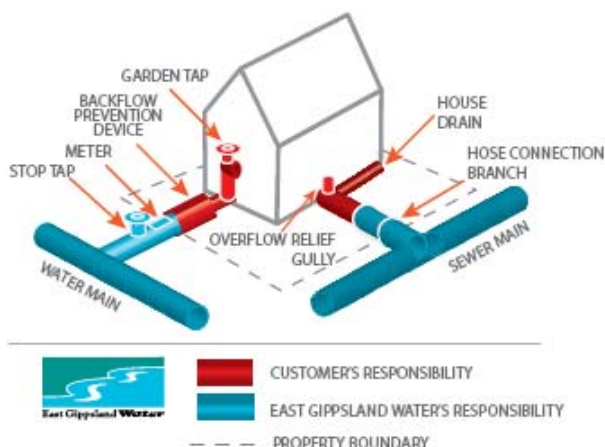
# SEWER BLOCKAGES – WHAT TO DO



## Who is responsible?

East Gippsland Water is responsible for the maintenance and repair of all sewer mains and associated pipework up to the point of connection to your sewer pipes.

You are responsible for maintaining and repairing all sewer pipes and plumbing on your property up to the point of connection to East Gippsland Water's sewer pipework.



## Signs of a sewer blockage

Indications that there is a sewer blockage include -

- Toilets, sinks, baths and shower bases are slow to empty.
- Toilets fill higher than usual or overflow.
- When the toilet is flushed and when sinks, baths and shower bases are emptied, the Overflow Relief Gully (ORG) on your property overflows. It may overflow continuously even when these facilities are not being used (signifying a blocked sewer **main**).
- Sewer access pits (manholes) on your property or on the nature strip overflow.
- Gurgling noises are heard from wastewater drains.

## Causes

Blockages can be caused by -

- Tree roots penetrating sewer pipes through cracks.
- Disposal of unsuitable items like sanitary pads, nappies or rubbish down the toilet.
- A build-up of food scraps, fat or grease disposed of down the sink.
- Pipes crushed by the movement of the sub-soil or overloading the ground above.
- The illegal connection of stormwater downpipes to the sewer causing them to overflow when it rains.

## What to do

It is important that you first contact East Gippsland Water's 24 hour emergency and faults service on **1300 134 202**. Our staff will attend as soon as possible to assess the situation and ascertain who is responsible for any repairs.

If the blockage is in our pipes we will clear it and there will be no charge.

We will advise you if the blockage is in your pipes. In this case you will need to contact and pay a licensed plumber to fix the problem.

Failure to contact us in the first instance could leave you facing unnecessary plumbing charges.

## Problem prevention

Knowing where your sewer pipes run will help identify areas to avoid when planting certain trees and shrubs.\*

Check with East Gippsland Water if you do not know where your pipes are. In nearly all cases we can provide a map pinpointing their position.

In addition:

- Use biodegradable products and avoid pouring oil, grease or fat down the sink.
- Compost food scraps rather than wash them down the sink.
- Do not flush sanitary pads, disposable nappies or rubbish down the toilet.

\* An information leaflet with general advice on plants, shrubs and trees suitable for planting near sewers (*Be sewer smart when planting trees*) can be viewed on the East Gippsland Water website [www.egwater.vic.gov.au](http://www.egwater.vic.gov.au). Copies are also available from the Bairnsdale office. Alternatively contact your local garden nursery for guidance.



## For more information –

Contact East Gippsland Water on **1300 720 700** or by emailing [egw@egwater.vic.gov.au](mailto:egw@egwater.vic.gov.au)

Alternatively visit the Bairnsdale office at **133 Macleod Street weekdays during business hours.**