

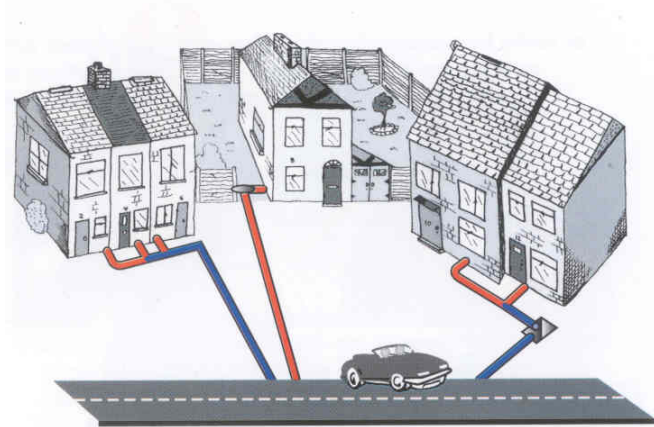
# DRAIN or SEWER?

## Who owns these underground drainage pipes?

**Two types** of underground drainage pipe take waste water and rainwater away from buildings and land.

The picture opposite shows a typical domestic arrangement.

**DRAINS – are shown in red.**  
**SEWERS – are shown in blue.**



Every home or property has underground waste pipes connected to it. These are called **DRAINS** and are usually made of clay or plastic.

These initially take sewage or rainwater from just the one property. Further along or away from the property the drains of several other properties will join together into a shared pipe. This pipe is then called a **SEWER**, and is usually slightly larger.

### **So who owns these drainage pipes?**

Some pipes belong to the owners or occupiers of buildings or land. Others are owned by local area water supply companies. You can usually determine ownership from the age of the properties that are connected to the pipes and whether the pipes are drains or sewers.

### **Who owns a drain?**

Drains legally belong to the owner or occupier of the property they are connected to even if they go under someone else's land or road. The owner or occupier is responsible for maintaining or unblocking them when there are problems.

### **Who owns a sewer?**

Sewer pipes will often run along the front or back of several properties or towards the road. The age of the properties connected to them is important because it determines who owns the sewer.

With properties built **before** October 1937, the shared sewer pipe is called a **public sewer**. These are owned by the water company which supplies your area with water and they are legally responsible for maintaining them.

For properties built **after** October 1937 the shared sewer pipe is called a **private sewer**. These belong jointly to all the people who own properties that connect to them.

**Note:** The law says that if they are blocked or broken, it is **only** the owners "up stream" of the blockage or break who are responsible for solving the problem.

## What if the drain or sewer becomes blocked?

First, try and find out if anyone else is affected. Have a word with your neighbours. Blockages will often cause waste water to overflow from manhole covers or drainage gully's outside, or cause toilets and sinks to empty too slowly.

### Clearing a blocked drain

If you're sure that it's only your house that's affected, you'll probably need to contact a drain cleaning specialist like **DRAIN-MEDIC**. We will usually try to clear the blockage first by using mechanical rodding equipment, then by using high pressure water jetting.



### Clearing a blocked sewer

If you think that several properties are affected, it's likely that the problem is in the sewer (the 'shared' drainage pipe).

If the sewer takes waste water away from properties built before October 1937, it's a public sewer.

If the sewer takes waste water away from properties built after 1937, it's a private sewer. You and the other owners affected are jointly responsible.

### How can we help?

If a blockage can't be cleared by rodding or jetting; or we find the sewer is broken and needs repairing; then the joint owners will have to employ a contractor.

**DRAIN-MEDIC** offer both a "look & see" CCTV service and a Full CCTV survey along with a written report, quotation and DVD recording.

We can give you detailed advice and tell you about any specialist repair services ... If we do this, we can individually charge each one of the joint owners a share of the costs.

### Choosing a specialist contractor

Fortunately most blockages can be cleared by mechanical rodding or high pressure water jetting. However, if we can't clear the blockage, we will tell you exactly what we are going to do and how much it will cost BEFORE we start the work.

### Will my building insurance cover any costs?

Drain or sewer problems may be covered for insurance purposes, but you are advised to check with your building insurance company first.

**DRAIN-MEDIC** is an Insurance approved contractor.