



**Scottish  
Water**

Trusted to serve Scotland



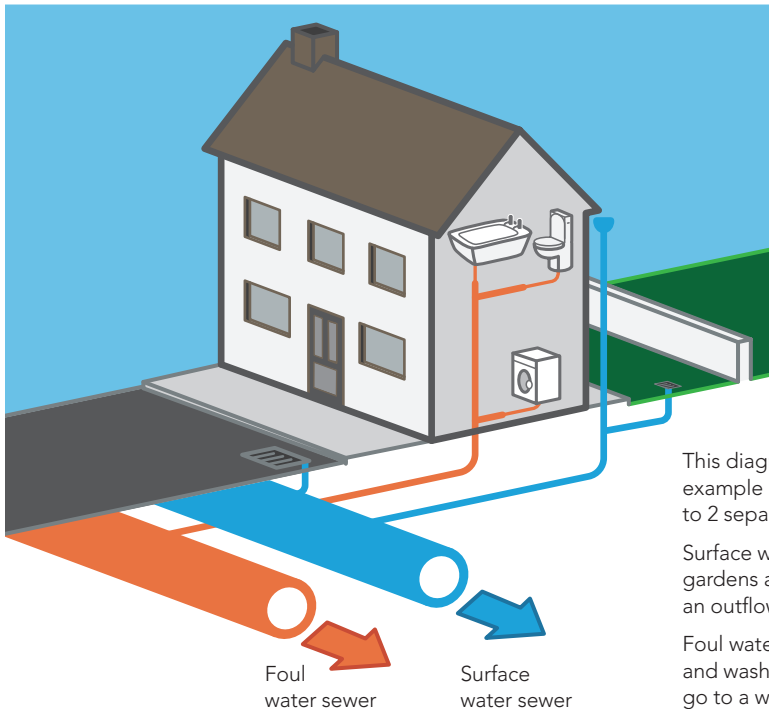
**Misconnections explained**

Misconnections can have a serious impact on our environment and contribute to flooding so it's important they are rectified as soon as possible. This leaflet provides information about what a misconnection is and what to do if you discover one.

A misconnection is a term applied when the drainage from a building has been connected to the wrong sewer network, either a foul water connection to a surface water system or vice versa. They are the result of incorrect plumbing and pollute waterways across the country.

Sewage and waste water from toilets, baths, showers, dishwashers, washing

machines and sinks should go straight into the main foul or combined sewer (a sewer that is designed to accept both foul and surface water). However, when they are wrongly plumbed into the surface water drain – a separate pipe which should only collect rainwater and empty into the nearest water body – they can cause pollution.



This diagram shows an example of a house connected to 2 separate sewer systems

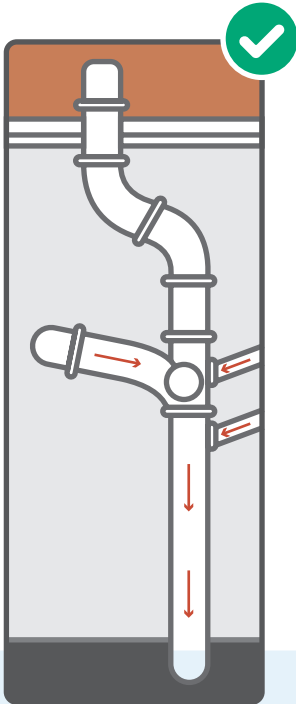
Surface water from drains, gardens and gutters will go to an outflow at a water course.

Foul water from toilets, sinks and washing machines will go to a waste water treatment works.

## How do they happen?

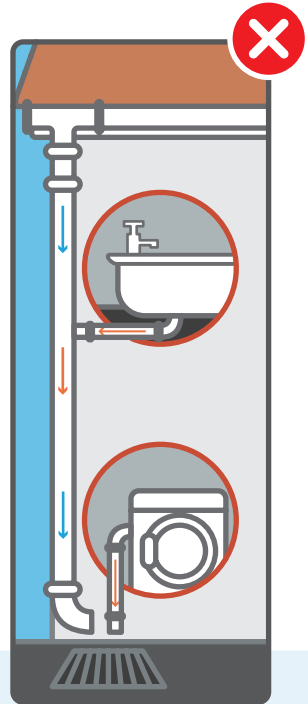
For most properties built after 1920, the waste water will drain into a separate sewer system. If any dirty water pipes from appliances, sinks, baths, showers or toilets are connected to the surface water system, this pollutes your local river or beach. Similarly, if gutters are wrongly connected, they send clean rainwater into the foul water sewer, which can overwhelm the system and may cause flooding.

Misconnections can be above ground whereby appliances or drains are wrongly connected usually as a result of extensions, domestic refitting of toilets, kitchens and bathrooms. They can also include below ground misconnections often due to mistakes by builders or developers.



### **CORRECT**

Showing an example of a typical foul water drain that connects underground. A toilet waste pipe usually has a larger diameter than a roof drainpipe.



### **INCORRECT**

The pipe at the top is for surface water i.e. rainwater. Anything inside a property that discharges water should not be connected to a surface water drain, this would be a misconnection.

## How does Scottish Water identify misconnections?

We will usually identify a misconnection following investigation where we are carrying out a project connected to improvements in bathing waters/shellfish waters or where the misconnection is causing pollution to a watercourse such as a river or localised network flooding.

### What we will do when we identify a misconnection

If our investigations reveal a misconnection, we will contact the property owner to:

- Inform them of the result of our investigation.
- Inform them of the nature and seriousness of the pollution issue.
- Clearly explain the issue and the impact of the misconnection.
- Explain what happens next.
- Provide a Scottish Water contact for them to discuss the issue.
- Outline who else they can contact for further advice and information.

## Who is responsible for fixing a misconnection?

Property owners are responsible for the maintenance and repair of sewage pipes within the boundary of their property. If you rent the property, you should contact the landlord who is responsible for putting it right. This may be the local council, housing association or a private landlord.

It is worth noting that Scottish Water has powers to ensure misconnections are rectified under Section 15 of the Sewerage (Scotland) Act 1968. If the defect is not rectified within an allocated timeframe, then we may carry out the works and recover any reasonable expenses incurred for the repair. Customers have the right to appeal the notice by Summary Application to the Sheriff.

## Licensed plumbers

We would always recommend the use of licensed plumbers. Scottish Water supports and promotes the WaterSafe scheme. WaterSafe is a dedicated online search facility to help customers to find the nearest qualified plumbing and heating professionals in their area.

Scottish and Northern Ireland Plumbing Employers' Federation (SNIPEF) runs the Plumbing Industry Licensing Scheme and this is part of WaterSafe.

To find a licensed plumber in your area, visit WaterSafe at [www.watersafe.org.uk](http://www.watersafe.org.uk) or SNIPEF at [www.needaplumber.org](http://www.needaplumber.org)



Alternative formats of this leaflet can be made available free of charge. For information on Braille, large print, audio and a variety of languages, please call our Customer Helpline.

If you have a disability, medical condition or other reason where you may need additional assistance from Scottish Water then please contact us and we can add your name, address and requirements to our confidential Priority Services Register.

We record all calls for quality and training purposes.



### How did we do?

Are you impressed with the service you received? Did one of our team go the extra mile for you? Nominate them for a Scottish Water gem Award and give them the recognition they deserve.

Visit [www.scottishwater.co.uk/gem](http://www.scottishwater.co.uk/gem) or call our Customer Helpline on **0800 0778778** to make your nomination.

## Visit



[www.scottishwater.co.uk](http://www.scottishwater.co.uk)

## E-mail



[help@scottishwater.co.uk](mailto:help@scottishwater.co.uk)

## Follow us



[facebook.com/scottishwater](https://www.facebook.com/scottishwater)



[@scottish\\_water](https://twitter.com/scottish_water)

## Write



Scottish Water, PO Box 8855,  
Edinburgh, EH10 6YQ

## Call

Customer Helpline free 24/7



**0800 0778778**