

Correcting common plumbing defects

Fact Sheet

Why fix household plumbing defects?

Some common household plumbing defects can cause wastewater (sewage) to overflow inside your home. They can also allow rainwater to enter the city's wastewater network, resulting in wastewater overflows into yards, streets and creeks. These overflows can be a risk to community and environmental health. Stormwater connections to the wastewater system are also illegal, and property owners can be prosecuted.

Defect: Overflow relief gully too low

An overflow relief gully (ORG) is a plumbing fitting located outside your home that is designed to release wastewater if a pipe becomes blocked or the wastewater network is overloaded. If this occurs, the ORG grate should pop off to release excess pressure, and wastewater is then directed away from your home. Houses with several bathrooms may have more than one ORG. Plumbing regulations require ORGs to be installed at least 150mm below the lowest internal drain fixture (usually a floor waste or shower drain) to prevent internal wastewater surcharges, and 75mm above the surrounding finished ground level. The exception to this is where the gully riser is located in a path or paved area. In this case, the ORG must be finished at a level that will prevent rainwater from entering the wastewater network in wet weather.

How do I fix it?

If your ORG is incorrectly installed, contact a licensed plumber to raise the ORG to the correct height, if possible. If the ORG cannot be raised because of the height of the internal floor waste, landscaping, drainage or other options will need to be considered.



Defect: Inspection shaft lid damaged

Inspection shafts are located outside your home, near your property boundary and adjacent to a connection with Council's wastewater pipeline. Inspection shafts are usually identified by a flat plastic or cast iron round lid (about 18cm in diameter) within a concrete surround. They are designed to help you determine if a wastewater blockage has occurred within or outside your property (i.e. if the shaft is clear, it is likely that a blockage is within your household drainage system). You are responsible for ensuring that the inspection shaft on your property is visible and in working order.

How do I fix it?

You can purchase replacement lids in different sizes from your local plumbing or hardware store. It is often a good idea to photograph and measure your inspection shaft to help you select the right sized lid. If other parts of the fitting (or bolted trap screw) are damaged, it may need to be replaced.



Defect: Roof downpipe connected to ORG

It is illegal for your home's roofwater downpipes, or other drainage pipes, to discharge directly into the wastewater network (e.g. into an ORG).

How do I fix it?

Contact a licensed plumber to redirect your downpipes, or other drainage pipes, to a legal point of discharge such as a roadside kerb, approved installed roofwater discharge point or on-site rubble pit.



For more information
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