

Sewer Inflow & Infiltration

Are you illegally connected to the sewerage reticulation system? Have you done any landscaping that could have caused water runoff to enter your gully trap (overflow relief gully)? Gladstone Regional Council advises residents that fines can be imposed for such practices because they have the potential to divert more water into the system than it is capable of carrying and result in sewer overflows and health risks to neighbours.

Sewerage System

Gladstone Regional Council's sewerage system is designed to transfer sewage and wastewater from each home or business to the wastewater treatment plants via house drains, sewers and pumping stations.

The sewerage system is not designed to carry runoff from rainfall and can result in overflowing into other residential households.

In times of heavy rainfall, the sewerage system can become affected by the inflow of stormwater which, in turn, can have the following effects:

- The capacity of the network becomes overloaded; and
- Sewer overflows can occur (from manholes).

What constitutes inflow/infiltration

Inflow/infiltration is any external source of water, stormwater or groundwater that enters the sewerage system.

The majority of inflow is caused by:

- Illegal rainwater connections into the sewer network; and/or
- Landscaping that diverts stormwater into manholes or overflow relief gullies (ORGs).

More about Overflow Relief Gullies (ORG)



A correctly installed ORG.

The gully trap, or what is commonly referred to as the ORG, prevents smells and overflows entering buildings.

The ORG is located outside your house; generally in the area outside of your kitchen. The ORG should be above ground level to ensure that stormwater does not enter.

Inflow through the ORG is normally unintentional when stormwater cannot flow away due to landscaping or other



Whose responsibility is it?

Council is responsible for the sewer system outside residential property boundaries. Household drainage within the boundary of properties is the responsibility of property owners. All manholes are the responsibility of Council.

** Image courtesy of Mackay Regional Council*

obstructions blocking the flow-path of the stormwater. The stormwater builds up around the ORG and then, when high enough, enters the network.

Residents need to be aware that any discharge of stormwater into the sewer network, whether it be through the ORG or connection of storm water downpipes or drainage pipes, is illegal and can result in a Council fine.

Why is it a problem?

- Inflow/Infiltration increases the volume of water in the sewer systems which can result in the capacity of the network being exceeded. This causes the network to overflow, resulting in environmental harm and creating risks to human health.
- To fix this problem through the construction of larger pipes, pump stations and treatment plants will cost Council many millions of dollars and will directly affect ratepayers.

Check to see if you have a problem

Owners/occupants might not always be aware that rainwater from their property is entering the sewerage system.

Previous residents might have connected rainwater pipes illegally to the network. Owners/occupiers must investigate their drainage system by:

- Checking that all downpipes discharge to the ground or to the street: This can be done by discharging water into your downpipe and seeing the point where the water flows out. If no point of discharge can be found, there might be an illegal connection.
- Inspecting the area around the ORG to ensure that stormwater can flow away. Verify this during a rain event. If water dams up around the ORG, adjust the landscaping or remove the obstacle.

Please contact Council if you cannot find your ORG or if you think you might have an illegal connection.

What next?

Gladstone Regional Council is committed to reducing the incidence of illegal and inadvertent inflows into the sewerage reticulation system.

Council has embarked on an inspection program to identify illegal connections and the inadvertent channelling of water into the sewerage reticulation system.

Council will fine people who blatantly flaunt the law but offers an amnesty for those who seek to rectify the situation within a 30-day grace period.

Please do not wait for Council to make you aware of problems and fix them as soon as possible.

Council and affected neighbours appreciate your cooperation.

Still have questions?

For further information phone Council's Water & Sewerage section on (07) 4975 8100 or email info@gladstonerc.qld.gov.au

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

LANDSCAPING



Landscaping that directs stormwater into the ORG.

PAVING



Paving that incorrectly channels water into the sewer system.

ILLEGAL PLUMBING



Illegal plumbing. The pipe from the right channels stormwater into the ORG.