



Collapsed Private Services in Public Land Program

Guide for customers

If your licensed plumber has found that your private sewer pipe (your private service) has collapsed under a public road or footpath, then Sydney Water may be able to help with the repair through the **Collapsed Private Service in Public Land Program (the repair Program)**.

What does the repair Program do?

The repair Program helps residential customers when the only way to repair a collapsed private sewer pipe is to excavate a road or footpath.

While the Program is free, it's only available to eligible customers, and it's subject to certain conditions.

We can't perform immediate emergency repairs under the Program, so you should contact your private licensed plumber if the issue is urgent. Licensed plumbers can also source the equipment needed to perform excavations and repairs on private services, and they're authorised to do this work.

Situations where we can help

The Customer Contract authorises us to assist:

- when you have evidence from a licensed plumber that your private sewer pipe has collapsed, and it can't be repaired by relining
- when the collapse is located on public land outside the boundary of your property
- when the collapse is under a roadway or hard footpath (not a grass verge, dirt path or green area)
- when the plumber hasn't already exposed your pipes in the road or footpath

- we agree with your licensed plumber that replacing the pipe is the only option.



Our team can safely excavate and repair your collapsed pipes under public roadways and footpaths.

Providing evidence of the collapsed pipe

To be eligible for repairs under the Program, you need to provide evidence that clearly shows the collapse of your sewer pipe. This normally means

clear CCTV footage or photos from your plumber showing the collapse.

You or your plumber can either email us the footage or upload the footage to a free online sharing system like Dropbox or Google Drive –



Example of clear photo evidence showing displaced and collapsed pipework at the end of a section of pipe.

don't forget to share the link so we can view it. You'll also need to sign and return the Terms and Conditions document.

If your private plumber can't provide evidence of the collapse

You can ask for us to send an independent specialist plumber to verify that your private service has collapsed under the footpath or roadway. The independent plumber will take CCTV footage of your pipes and use high-pressure jetting equipment to attempt to clear any blockage.

We will cover the costs if the independent plumber confirms that your service has collapsed under public land.

If the independent plumber finds that your private service has not collapsed under the footpath or roadway, or there's some other issue (such as tree roots or wipes causing a blockage), they will bill you (the property owner) directly for their costs. Charges are currently \$500 + GST for the first half hour and \$150 + GST for every half hour after that.

How to find out if you're eligible

Our Collapsed Services team will review any evidence provided by you or your plumber and perform some additional assessments. This process can take up to two business days to complete. We'll contact you as soon as it's finalised.

What happens next?

Once we've confirmed you're eligible for repairs under the Program and you've returned the signed Terms and Conditions document, a repair specialist will be able to attend.

The specialist will scope the work needed for the repair, including excavation size, safety equipment and any required road opening permissions. This process normally takes two to four business days depending on weather and other factors.

Once your repair has been scoped, we'll return to excavate and perform the repair. We can normally complete repairs within 10 days, depending on road opening permissions, weather and other external factors. You don't need to be at the property for us to make the repair.

We'll keep you informed if we think the repairs will take longer.

How to apply for the repairs Program

1. Send evidence of your collapse to collapsedservice@sydneywater.com.au.
2. Sign and return the Terms and Conditions document.
3. If you don't have evidence of the collapse, you can ask for an independent specialist plumber to attend.
4. We'll contact you with an outcome within two days.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a 'collapse'?

We define a collapse as when the pipe is more than 25% collapsed.

If your pipe is cracked or only slightly dislodged, then your private licensed plumber should be able to assist you.

What if there are multiple properties on a joint or shared service?

You have a joint service if your private wastewater pipe also serves other properties. Joint services are more common in older parts of Sydney, such as terrace housing developments or older industrial areas.

Each owner who is connected to a joint private service is responsible for maintaining it. This means that each owner who is connected to the sewer pipe will need to sign the Terms and Conditions to allow us to repair the collapsed pipe.

What if the collapse isn't under a road or footpath?

You'll need to speak with a licensed plumber to discuss your repair options if:

- the cause of your blockage is from tree roots, wet wipes or a cracked/displaced pipe that can be repaired by relining the pipe
- the collapse is located under a grass verge, dirt path or green space
- the collapse is inside your boundary.

We can't undertake these kinds of repair works under the Program.

Who is responsible for maintaining private wastewater pipes?

All property owners are responsible for the operation and maintenance of their private wastewater pipes up to the point where they connect to the Sydney Water main. This point of connection is sometimes outside your property boundary and can be under a public road.

What options do I have if I don't want to use your repair Program?

You don't have to use our repair Program, and any licensed plumber can also perform repairs on private pipes under roadways and paths.

You should speak with your local council to find out about road or path opening permissions before starting to excavate.

Can I be reimbursed for any work previously completed?

We will not reimburse the property owner or the plumber for work to investigate the fault on private wastewater pipes, or for any damages/claims arising from or related to the plumber's work.

Can you repair other problems besides the collapse?

Under the Customer Contract, we're only authorised to conduct repairs related to collapsed private services in public land.

If we find another issue, we'll inform you immediately so you can speak with your private licensed plumber.

Who is responsible for cleaning up overflows, or managing any environmental impacts?

Property owners are responsible for containing any overflow from their sewer pipes, even if we have agreed to perform the repair.

Sydney Water is not liable for damage caused, or for costs associated with overflow containment, clean-up or alternative accommodation.

Who is responsible for determining eligibility and when Terms and Conditions apply?

Our delegated representative determines if you are eligible for the Program. Once you have been approved, the Program's Terms and Conditions apply.

Acceptance into the repair Program is at Sydney Water's discretion.

What other eligibility conditions apply?

While we try to help, not all repairs are eligible for the Program.

Examples of repair situations that are usually outside the Program's scope are:

- repairs on pipes owned by council, government housing, government departments or local utilities
- repairs on pipes that service non-residential properties
- repairs on collapsed pipes where the collapse is not under a hard stand surface ('hard stand' being pavement, asphalt, bitumen or similar)
- repairs on low-pressure sewer services
- repairs on pump-to-sewer services
- repairs on unauthorised or illegal services.

You can engage a private licensed plumber for these repairs.

Additionally, we may be able to help in the following situations even though they are not specifically covered in the scope of the program:

- Your service has collapsed under a protected tree on public land, for example, underneath a large fig tree on the council-owned verge and the fig tree cannot be removed.
- Your service has collapsed underneath another authority's asset, such as a Telstra box or an electrical substation.

Sydney Water always reserves the right to determine eligibility for the Program at its discretion.