

Sewage Overflows

How to prevent sewage overflows and maintain a healthy community.



The sewerage system transfers wastewater from each property to the wastewater treatment plant via house drains, sewers and pumping stations.

The system is not designed to cope with or carry runoff from rainfall. During wet weather substantial runoff from rainfall enters the sewerage system through illegal downpipe connections to the sewer, cracked or damaged pipes, or low overflow relief gullies. Excess water in the sewerage system can cause it to back up and overflow into homes and the environment.

Help prevent this problem

Check your property for illegal stormwater connections to the sewer. Downpipes that are connected directly to the sewer create an excess load on the system, which it is not designed for. This can cause sewage to overflow into homes and the environment.

Check your overflow relief gully to reduce the risk of an overflow in your home.

What is an overflow relief gully (ORG)?

An ORG is a drain-like fitting located outside the home. Should the sewerage main or

property service drain become blocked, sewage will discharge from the ORG outside, rather than from another point inside the home.

How does it work?

If the sewerage system becomes blocked causing the flow to back up, the loosely fitted grate on the top of the ORG is designed to pop off completely (if installed correctly) allowing the sewage to escape outside, rather than from another point inside your home.

Your ORG responsibilities

It is the home owner's

responsibility to make sure their home is fitted with a properly designed and operational ORG. When an ORG is not functioning correctly the property damage and health risks associated with sewage spilling inside or under a property are greatly increased.

Check your ORG to ensure:

- It is not covered by landscaping or garden beds
- It is not covered by bricks or pot plants
- The grate is able to pop off easily and isn't stuck due to corrosion, or permanently fixed in the concrete
- It is not underneath the property as a result of not being moved when a house extension was built
- It is not blocked with concrete as a result of a driveway or paving construction

Make sure your ORG has:

- A clear drainage path (so spills drain away quickly without causing damage)
- Fitting that can pop off completely

What is Mackay Regional Council doing to help?

Mackay Regional Council will carry out inspections including smoke testing of the sewerage system, focusing on house drains, overflow relief

ILLEGAL DOWNPIPE CONNECTION



Illegally connected downpipe feeding directly into an overflow relief gully.



Smoke testing identifies an illegal connection.

gullies and plumbing within each property throughout the region.

a downpipe will indicate an illegal stormwater connection.

Smoke testing involves the injection of a non-toxic smoke into sewers and house drains to identify how and where smoke escapes into the atmosphere. For example, smoke being emitted from

Contact Council's Customer Service Centre on 1300 MACKAY (622 529) or visit www.mackay.qld.gov.au for further information.