



(<https://www.devon.gov.uk/roadsandtrc>)

Maintaining roads

Flooding and drainage

We build and maintain our roads to reduce the amount of standing water and limit the water on, or in, our roads as much as possible. We also ensure, as far as we can, that roads are kept clear of rainwater.

[Report a flooding or drainage problem here.](#)

(<https://www.devon.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/maintaining-roads/managing-the-network/flooding-and-drainage/report-standing-water-flooding-or-blocked-drains/>)

Blocked drains

Devon has approximately 180,000 gullies. A sudden storm or downpour can often result in more water on the road than our gullies or ditches can cope with. In severe weather the capacity of the drainage system can be overwhelmed by the amount of water trying to run off from the road and flooding can occur.

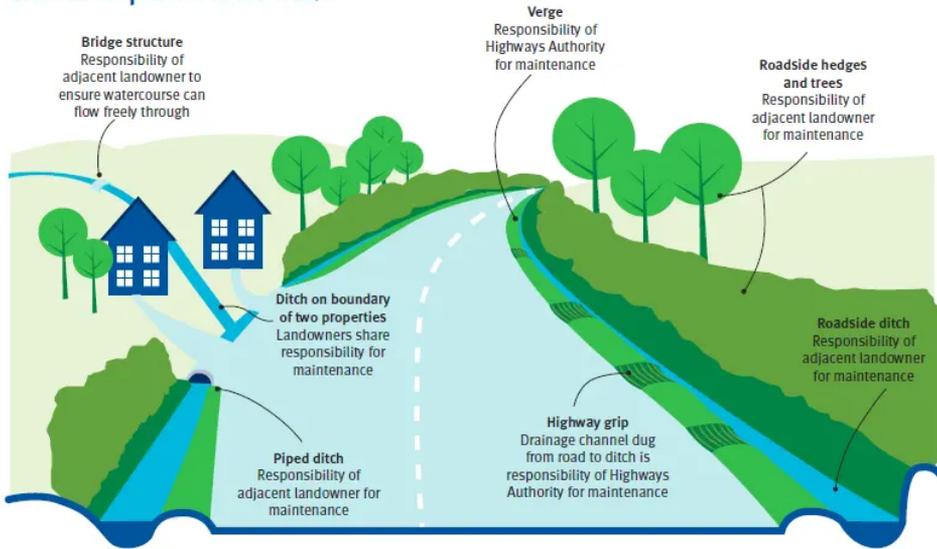
We will:

- empty urban gullies with sumps at least once every three years
- empty rural gullies with sumps at least once a year
- flush gullies without sumps once a year
- respond to reports of blocked drains which are causing standing water

A sump is a trap in the drain which catches the material that is washed in. This helps to ensure that the water flowing in the pipes is not obstructed by accumulations of silt and other materials.

In order to identify what work is required to each defective gully we use coloured tags.

Who is responsible for what?



(<https://mk0devonxbk65t3kfl.kinstacdn.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/83/2020/02/Drainage-Responsibility.png>)

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Who is responsible for what?

- Bridge structure is the responsibility of adjacent landowner to ensure watercourse can flow freely through.
- Ditch on boundary of two properties – landowners share responsibility for maintenance.
- Piped ditch is responsibility of adjacent landowner for maintenance.
- Verge is the responsibility of Highways Authority for maintenance.
- Highway grip – the drainage channel dug from road to ditch is the responsibility of Highways Authority for maintenance.
- Roadside ditch is the responsibility of adjacent landowner for maintenance.
- Roadside hedges and trees are the responsibility of adjacent landowner for maintenance.

We will take action in relation to water on the highway under the following conditions:

Standing water or running water

We will take action if, 24 hours after the rain has stopped, there is standing water where a speed limit of 40mph or above is in force, and where highway users can reasonably travel at 40mph or above, to minimise the risk of aquaplaning.

Highway flooding causing an obstruction

If it's an emergency and there is danger to life as a result of flooding call **999**.

If, 24 hours after the rain has stopped:

- the road is impassable
- the water is forcing vehicles, cyclists or pedestrians away from the nearside of the road by more than one metre
- vehicles have to cross the centreline marking

we will attempt to clear the standing water if appropriate. If unable to clear the water, we will use a flood sign or guard the area or close the road to make the location safe and then investigate a permanent solution.

Consultation will be required with adjacent landowner/occupier where appropriate.

Please note that standing/running water will not be investigated during prolonged heavy rain.

Other forms of drainage

We also have about 40,000 open drains or holes in the verge, hedge or bank that permit the water to drain from the road.

Examples are:

- easements and 'buddle holes' – a hole or pipe that carries water through a hedge or bank
- 'grips' – a ditch across the verges which drains water into a back ditch.

We aim to clean these drainage systems on an annual basis in problem areas. Ditches along the side of the road are the responsibility of whoever owns the land on which they are situated and should be maintained in order to keep the ditch capable of carrying water away from the road.

The cleaning programme for grips, easements and buddle holes, on the priority network will be available shortly. Please be aware that these dates can be subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances.

Parish lengthsman

Parish lengthsman visit each parish in Devon on a programmed basis to undertake the cleaning of drainage features such as grips and easements and hand cleaning of gullies **on the minor network**.

Dropped/Lost items

If you have lost or dropped an item down a highway drain please contact us, however there may be a charge for the retrieval of personal items.

Flooding

If a river is flooding contact the Environment Agency on **0345 988 1188**. The Environment Agency also has a range of [information about flood warnings and precautions \(https://www.gov.uk/check-if-youre-at-risk-of-flooding\)](https://www.gov.uk/check-if-youre-at-risk-of-flooding).

Find out more about Devon's [flood risk management strategy \(https://www.devon.gov.uk/floodriskmanagement/\)](https://www.devon.gov.uk/floodriskmanagement/) and what to do before, during and after a flood.

Sandbags

Councils do not have a duty to provide sandbags to individuals although some districts may still provide limited quantities, empty bags or make them available via town or parish councils. Check with your [district council \(https://www.devon.gov.uk/neighbouring-authorities/\)](https://www.devon.gov.uk/neighbouring-authorities/) for local arrangements.