



Rodent
investigation
policy.

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1. Background

The Water Act 2014 includes provisions for market opening for the non-household market on 1 April 2017. This is one of a number of policies that are being developed specifically for Thames Water Utilities Limited Wholesale Wastewater to adopt post 1 April 2017.

We developed our Rodent Investigation Policy to communicate the way we will handle a rodent incident and make sure we address any defects in the sewer that may allow future rodent activity.

2. Scope

This policy defines the approach and sets out the key principles which govern the way we manage rodent incidents and applies to all Thames Water employees, retailers and third parties.

For the avoidance of doubt, this policy applies to both household and non-household customers, within our wholesale operational area.

This document covers the following:

- general statements for rodent investigation
- office investigation and customer contact
- call en-route
- investigation
- promises and appointments
- updating the customer
- powers of entry
- notification to retailer(s).

3. Definition of terms

Customer - household or non-household customer (where applies to one specific group, it will be referred appropriately)

Operational area - the geographical area where we provide waste network services

Retailer - the organisation responsible for providing retail services

Third parties - other authorities such as highways authority or Environment Agency

4. Principles

Investigating the rodent incident in line with the “national protocol for cooperation on rodent control” and addressing any defects in the sewer that could be allowing rodent activity, underpins the way we provide the service. The key principles which have shaped the development of this policy are:

- understanding the symptoms and impact to help determine our response
- being available for customers to contact us 24/7, 365 days a year
- providing rodent baiting in cooperation with the local authority
- repairing any defects to our sewer that could allow rodent entry/exit
- helping reduce the risk of future rodent incidents
- minimising localised disruption from our work.

5. Policy

a. General statements for rodent investigation

- When a customer calls to report a rodent incident, we will collect information about the customer, including their address, whether the property they're calling about is household or non-household and the appropriate retailer.
- We may refer the customer to their local authority if the rodent activity seems to be unrelated to an issue with our sewer and the local authority hasn't been contacted in the first instance, as per the "national protocol for cooperation on rodent control".

b. Office investigation and customer contact

- Following initial contact, we will carry out an office investigation before contacting the customer to agree next steps.
- If we believe the issue is private or a third party's responsibility or the local authority has not been contacted, we'll let the customer know and will not take any further action.
- If our office investigation suggests a possible issue related to one of our assets, our planning team will attempt to arrange a visit to investigate further.

c. Call en route

- While we are on our way to attend an incident, we'll attempt to contact the customer and advise that we are en route.
- We will attempt to contact the customer if we cannot meet the agreed customer promise.

d. Investigation

- When on site, we will begin investigations and may need to liaise directly with the customer to discuss the problem in more detail or gain access to manhole covers inside the property boundary. It may be appropriate to bait the sewer on our initial visit.
- If a defect, like a broken manhole cover, is identified as the cause of rodent activity, the Service Recovery Policy (defective covers) applies. Following initial investigation, we may advise the customer to contact the local authority to carry out above ground baiting of the local area.
- We aim to resolve the issue on our first visit. However, this isn't always possible. If follow on work is required this will be raised as per our carrying out wastewater network follow on work service.

e. Promises and appointments

- We may offer an appointment where we need to meet the customer or gain access to their property. Any appointment will be made directly by us, in agreement with the customer. Appointment slots offered are:
 - 9am – 1pm or
 - 1pm – 5pm or
 - two hour appointments where the customer has requested a more specific time slot.

These appointments can be made 7 days a week.

f. Updating the customer

- Following investigation, we'll share the outcome of the visit with the Customer.

g. Notification to retailer(s)

- If an appointment is booked we'll notify the retailer within 2 business days of this being made. If this appointment date or time is changed, or cancelled, we'll notify the retailer of this change.
- Within 2 business days of our visit to investigate, we'll notify the retailer of the visit.
- Where we have identified that additional customers are impacted by rodents or we need access to neighbouring customer properties, we'll notify the additional retailers.

6.Changes to policy

This policy will be reviewed on a twelve monthly basis and updated periodically as required.

7.References

- National protocol for cooperation on rodent control
- Service Recovery Policy
- Water Industry Act 1991

8.Appendices

No appendices attached to this document