



BLOCKED DRAINS

WHAT IS A BLOCKED DRAIN AND HOW IS IT CAUSED?

There are drains inside your home – including toilets, sinks/basins, shower/bath; and drains outside your home for rainwater.

Blockages can occur anywhere along these systems that prevent the water from effectively draining away.

SIGNS OF A BLOCKED DRAIN

- Unpleasant smells from the drain
- Water slow to drain – this may be a partial blockage
- Raised water levels / water not draining – this may be a complete blockage
- Gurgling sounds indicating there is trapped air in the drain
- Drainage system not working properly – e.g. when using the washing machine, your kitchen sink will not drain

COMMON CAUSES

- Pouring cooking oils, fats, or grease down the sink
- Build-up of soaps/shampoos or detergent residue
- Loose hair after washing hair or shaving hair in a shower drain or bathroom sink
- Foreign objects such as food scraps, children's toys, cigarette butts
- Tree roots from nearby trees or bushes can make their way to nearby pipes
- Leaf litter, soil, grass clippings, stones etc. in an external drain in a yard

PREVENTING BLOCKED DRAINS

Inside your home:

- Avoid disposing of cooking oils, fats, or grease down the sink - instead place them in a can or jar and dispose of it in the bin.
- Use a drain strainer – a small strainer that sits over the sink waste hole - to keep small items going down the drain. You can buy these from supermarkets or larger stores such as Big W.
- Pour hot water down your sink drains periodically. However, do NOT use boiling water – this can warp the pipes.
- Brush your hair before showering or bathing. This removes loose hair that would otherwise end up in a drain.

Outside areas:

- Do not plant any trees or bushes without the permission of Bric Housing. Some trees have invasive root systems that can cause damage to pipes.
- Report any overgrown trees to Bric Housing - especially if you see rising water in nearby drains.
- Keep your yard area tidy - if you have external drains in your yard, make sure the grate is intact, and free from garden waste.





UNBLOCKING A DRAIN

There are some easy, cost-effective ways to unblock a drain. These are also safe and non-toxic.

If you have a blocked drain - try these first.

Baking Soda & Vinegar

This is one of the oldest treatments and is also non-toxic and cheaper than many store-bought chemicals.

It works for blockages that are relatively small, and to remove build ups of soap/shampoo etc.

Method:

1. Let hot water run for a minute to warm up the pipes.
2. Drop in 1/2 cup of baking (bi-carb) soda down the drain.
3. Pour in 1 cup of vinegar, cover the drain with a plug and let sit for 10 minutes – you will hear fizzing.
4. Rinse with more hot water.

Plunger

A plunger is useful for solid build-ups that cannot be dissolved and need to be dislodged.

A plunger can be purchased at any hardware or department store.

WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TENANT AND BRIC HOUSING?

The most common causes of blocked drains are preventable so we ask you to follow the steps above to maintain and clear the drain.

If the drain is still blocked or becomes a reoccurring issue, it may be the blockage is further down the pipe, or the cause is related to the surrounding environment (e.g. tree roots).

In this case, call Bric Housing so we can arrange a plumber to investigate, clear the blockage and advise the cause.

HOW TO REPORT REPAIRS

DURING BUSINESS HOURS

(9am - 5pm Mon - Fri)

Phone: 3230 5542 (maintenance direct line)

Phone: 3230 5555 (select Option 2)

Web: <https://bric.org.au/existing-tenants/report-a-repair/>

OUTSIDE BUSINESS HOURS

Phone: 3230 5555 (select Option 2)

Note: this is for emergencies only
e.g. a gas leak, or if you are locked out.

