



SOLICITORS

COMBINED HOUSE DRAIN

A combined house drain is a private sanitary drain serving two or more premises, draining to a single connection on the Council's sewer.

WHO HAS A COMBINED HOUSE DRAIN?

A number of households in Brisbane, particularly in older suburbs, are served by combined house drains. This drainage was installed by the original owners to minimise their costs of connection to the sewer.

Many of these drains are now 50 years old and require frequent maintenance and repair. Drains often have defective joints, or are damaged by ground movement. As a result, tree roots enter the drains and cause blockages. This should be seen as a symptom rather than a cause of problems.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

The Council's responsibility for maintenance and repairs stops at the sewer connection.

The Council's ordinances provide that the costs of clearing obstructions, maintenance and repairs on combined house drains are to be paid for by the owners of properties served by the drain.

As a matter of policy, the Council will clear blockages in a combined house drain free of cost.

However, the maintenance of the drain remains the joint responsibility of the owners of premises, and it is their obligation to find a licensed plumber to carry out permanent repair work after a blockage has been cleared.

If the owners are unable to agree on sharing the costs of repairs, or if they fail to make the necessary repairs, the Council will undertake the work and the costs will be apportioned between

the owners by the Brisbane City Council's Department of Water Supply and Sewerage.

Costs are apportioned as follows:

All properties connected to a combined house drain upstream from a repair will pay an equal share of costs.

Where a combined house drain is damaged by the action of a property owner through whose the land the drain passes, then the costs of repair will be apportioned to the owner causing the damage.

When there are changes to the use of premises served by a combined house drain, every effort is made to ensure properties are subsequently served by their own house drain.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact your local Council or the Director of Sewerage Operations.

Useful contact numbers:-

Brisbane City Council	(07) 3403-8888
Queensland Urban Utilities	132657

The information contained above is of a general nature. Should you have more specific enquiries then you should seek legal advice and not rely solely on this information.