

# Overflow relief gullies



*An ORG should not be covered by any materials or objects i.e. pot plants, tiles or paving.*

**Wet weather combined with blockages in the sewerage network can cause sewage overflows.**

Blockages from invading tree roots, waste disposed of incorrectly, and excess oils, fats or food wastes down the sink or toilet can clog internal plumbing causing overflows.

Proper maintenance of the overflow relief gully (ORG) will help direct the release of any sewage overflow to a point outside your home. If it is covered by pot plants, tiles or paving, any blockages in the sewage drainage system can overflow inside your house, causing damage to furniture and household items.

Remember that rainwater carrying leaves and debris can flow into your garden and cover overflow relief gullies.

## What is an 'overflow relief gully'?

An overflow relief gully is an important part of the sewerage system that directs sewage overflows outside your home, rather than inside your home.

It has a grated lid and can be found in the ground outside your home. It is connected to the main drain to stop sewage getting into your house when an overflow occurs.

Its design enables the contents of the drain to overflow into your garden or other outside area.

## Caring for your ORG?

The best way to care for an ORG is by not covering it with any materials or objects, including pot plants, tiles or paving. Also, make sure it is not used as a stormwater drain as additional inflows can cause a backup in the network.

## Blockage causes

Overflows can be caused by invading tree roots and waste that has been incorrectly disposed of, heavy rain and stormwater filtration.

## Responsibilities?

It is a property owner's responsibility to regularly check the ORG to ensure the grated lid is loosely fitted so it can pop off to allow sewage to escape.

It is also important that the ORG is sitting 75 millimetres above the ground or main surface area to stop rainwater or stormwater flowing into it.

## Are there regulations?

*Plumbing and Drainage Standards - AS 3500*, state that every home should have an ORG.

## Checklist for ORGs

- ✓ Remove tiles, pot plants or materials that may be sitting on or obstructing the ORG.
- ✓ Paving shouldn't go over the top of the ORG.
- ✓ Keep it clear of roof drainpipes.
- ✓ Avoid backwashing your pool during wet weather.
- ✓ Check paving or landscaping slopes to ensure the ORG is elevated 75 millimetres.
- ✓ Inspect the grate so it can pop off if a sewage overflow occurs.
- ✓ Ensure it isn't used as a rainwater or stormwater drain.



## Specifications

- The grate on an ORG must be easily removed.
- In general, they should be installed 75 millimetres above the surrounding ground.
- Installed at least 150 millimetres lower than the lowest waste outlet fitting in the home.
- A licensed plumber can install or investigate ORGs and advise you of the work and charges involved.

## Who do I contact?

A licensed plumber can install or investigate ORGs.

For a copy of your housing drainage plan contact the City's Plumbing and Drainage Section on **(07) 5582 8393**.

## For further information please contact:

City of Gold Coast  
**P** 1300 GOLDCOAST  
**W** [cityofgoldcoast.com.au/water](http://cityofgoldcoast.com.au/water)