

Name of policy:	Building Over or Near Council Water and Sewer Mains		
Adoption by Council:	29 June 2022	Minute number:	254/2022
Last review date:	June 2022		
Review timeframe:	4 years		
Next scheduled review date:	June 2026		
Related legislation:	<i>Local Government Act 1993</i>		
Associated policies/documents:	Guidelines for Building Over or Near Council Sewer and Water Mains		
Responsible division:	Infrastructure and Engineering Services		

Policy objective

This policy is aimed at:

- Preventing structural damage to Council's water and sewer infrastructure network.
- Preventing damage to buildings and other structures.
- Maintaining access to manholes, junctions, inspection shafts, valves and hydrants, therefore allowing Council staff to undertake regular maintenance to our network without having to remove buildings or other structures.
- Enabling efficient and economical access to pipework for major repairs and/or replacement without damaging structures.
- Providing a consistent approach to building over or near underground pipework throughout the MidCoast Council area. This will assist in maintaining the structural integrity of existing buildings that may be affected by new building proposals. Existing buildings may become at risk where a new building has been built without consideration for nearby pipelines. A new structure may impose a load on an underground line causing it to fail. This failure may, in turn, cause damage to the existing structures.

Policy statement

Council **will not** give approval for structures to be built **over** any sewer rising main or water main.

Council **may** approve structures to be built **over or adjacent to a sewer gravity main** or **adjacent** to a sewer rising main or a water main, providing structural engineers details with the design of the footings /pilings are adequate to cater for zone of influence requirements.

Coverage of the policy

This policy covers Council's requirements relating to building over or near the following Council owned water and sewer infrastructure:

- Sewer gravity mains
- Sewer rising mains
- Water mains
- All related infrastructure (manholes, junctions, inspection shafts, valves, hydrants etc)

In recently constructed subdivisions the above pipelines are located within an easement. The easement provides a means for Council to gain access to the pipelines. If an easement has been designated, it will be shown on the deposited plan for the block. Where a formal easement does not exist, Council has a legal right-of-way to obtain access to the pipes using relevant clauses in the Local Government Act and the Infrastructure SEPP (2007).

Strategic Plan link

MidCoast 2030: Shared Vision, Shared Responsibilities

Value: A connected community

Strategy 6.2 Continue to develop a sustainable network of water, sewer and storm water systems to meet community needs and health and safety standards

Policy content

This policy should be read in conjunction with the *Guidelines for Building Over or Near Council Sewer and Water Mains*.

Requirements for building near water mains and sewer mains

Generally, water mains and sewer mains on private property are located within easements, which protect the mains and allow Council continued access to the pipelines. However, Council has water mains and sewer mains that are not within easements. Applications to build adjacent to mains without easements will be assessed on an individual basis.

Council approval to build near a water main or sewer main will be subject to certain conditions which will depend on factors such as the size of the main, the existence of an easement, the depth of the main, site access, zone of influence, the blast zone and water flow path.

The following conditions apply to development near or over a water or sewer main:

- No structures are permitted within an easement for water supply. Council must have unrestricted access to the easement to repair, maintain or renew the main as required.
- No structures may overhang or project into a water main easement. Work carried out on larger mains will often involve large earthmoving machinery, trucks and cranes.
- No earthworks or improvements are permitted within an easement without approval from Council. This includes cutting, filling landscaping, tree planting, retaining walls etc.
- Unless known, gravity sewer mains have an assumed depth of approximately 1.5 metres.
- Structures erected adjacent to a main must be "self-supporting" within the *zone of influence*. This is generally achieved by using foundation support such as piers or piles founded to a depth which is below the *zone of influence*. The plans for the foundations must have written certification from the designing engineer that the structure is self-supporting within the *zone of*

influence and they do not impart loads on to the main. Foundations supported on solid rock which is within the *zone of influence* are considered self-supporting.

- Where Council has a main which is not within an easement, the *zone of influence* applies. A minimum of 3.0 metres horizontal clearance is required between the main and any proposed structure. The minimum horizontal clearance is 3.0 metres and may be increased where necessary to protect the main.
- No earthworks or improvements are permitted within 3.0 metres of a main without approval from Council. This includes cutting, filling, landscaping, tree planting, retaining walls etc. The minimum horizontal clearance is 3.0 metres and may be increased where necessary to protect the main.
- Council may impose additional approval conditions where a proposed development limits or restricts Council's opportunity to operate and maintain a water or sewer main.

The zone of influence

The *zone of influence* is an area extending both horizontally and longitudinally along a sewer or water main. This area is considered as that part of the ground where:

1. Settlement or disturbance of the ground surrounding the pipe may cause damage to buildings or structures on the surface above.
2. Loads from buildings or structures on the surface may have an impact on the buried pipe.

Council adopts a zone of influence that extends from either side of the bottom of the pipe horizontally for 600 mm, and then slopes up at a grade determined by soil conditions until it meets the ground surface.

A *zone of influence* exists adjacent to all Council water and sewer mains. Any structures within the *zone of influence* must be designed and certified to be self-supporting. **However, Council reserves the right to individually assess requirements for the zone of influence in relation to water and sewer mains for each development.** Factors influencing the requirements may include the existence of an easement, location of a main within an easement, the size of a main, the depth of a main, access to the site, water flow paths etc.

Generally, where Council has a water or sewer main within a designated easement, the *zone of influence* is defined as extending from the easement boundary at an assumed depth of 1.5 metres, upwards to the ground surface at a slope appropriate for the soil type. The assumed depth of 1.5 metres is to be used only where the actual pipe depth is unknown.

Generally, where Council has a water or sewer main which does not have a designated easement, the *zone of influence* is defined as extending from a nominal offset distance from the water main (minimum 3.0 metres) at an assumed depth of 1.5 metres upwards to the ground surface at a slope appropriate for the soil type. The assumed depth of 1.5 metres is to be used only where the actual pipe depth is unknown.

More information on the *zone of influence* can be found in the *Guidelines for Building Over or Near Council Sewer and Water Mains*.

Responsible officer (position)

Manager Water Planning and Assets