





AUTUMN LEAVES Blocked Drains and Flooding

As we enter the autumn months, it is important to be aware that there is an increased risk of surface water drains becoming blocked with fallen leaves, which increases the likelihood of surface water, or 'pluvial', flooding.

-  Our drainage systems are designed to transport surface water runoff to nearby rivers, streams and sewers. If drains become blocked with leaves, the water cannot be drained away and it can lead to a localised flash flood.
-  Surface water flooding is often amplified by the increase in impermeable surfaces from urban developments and infrastructure in towns and cities. These surfaces increase surface water runoff at times of heavy rainfall, contributing to flood risk.
-  With climate change becoming more and more apparent, extreme weather events are likely to become more common. This can lead to more incidents of drainage systems becoming overwhelmed and surface water flash flooding.
-  If residents and business owners are proactive and regularly clear leaves from drains outside their properties, they can reduce the likelihood of flooding in their local area.

What should you do?

It is the responsibility of your highways authority to keep road gullies clear of blockages. Your highways authority will typically be your district council (if it's a unitary authority) or the County Council.

While drainage departments often work to clear drains and gullies, they can become blocked with leaves again within hours.

Therefore, if you can easily and safely remove leaves from a drain yourself, it's often quicker to do so rather than wait for council assistance.

If you're unable to clear a blocked drain yourself, be sure to report it to the council. You can find your local council to report the blockage here: www.gov.uk/report-blocked-drain.



Image: The Flood Hub

If everyone takes a little time to clear leaves from drains during autumn, it will greatly benefit your local area and help reduce the risk of flooding.