

Finding information on sewage pollution and combined sewage overflows

What is a Combined Sewer Overflow?

Overflows are part of our drainage system, designed to relieve water networks from overflowing and flooding by releasing extra rainwater into rivers, lochs and the sea. However, much of Scotland has a Victorian era sewer system which collects sewage and rainwater runoff in the same channels in what is known as a Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO). This means that when overflows occur, they can discharge raw sewage into waterbodies.

There are approximately 3600 CSOs in Scotland, of which around 630 are classified as discharging unsatisfactorily.

Scottish Water live overflow map

Scottish water hold data on sewage overflows. They publish a near real-time map of the sewage overflows that are monitored, which is around 50% of all sewage overflows in Scotland as of 2026. [View the map here.](#)

The map provides information on where an overflow is operating or has recently been operating.

You can search for an overflow using a postcode, local authority area or waterbody, or through the map. You can also filter the available data to see only overflows where there is a current or recent overflow event.

Surfers Against Sewage also map sewage overflows across the UK, and give a greater history of spills in a given overflow outlet than Scottish Water. [View the Surfers Against Sewage map here.](#)

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Scottish Water annual data

Scottish Water also publish annual data for monitored overflows, usually in March. Updates are published annually, and contain data for the previous five years. This covers 6.5% of Scotland's overflows as of 2026, and Scottish Water are planning on increasing this in the future.

Reporting does not include the reason for overflows, as Scottish Water do not currently record this.

Annual data can be seen [here](#).