

PROTECTION OF WATER MAINS AND SERVICES

Tree Planting Restrictions Adjacent to Water Mains

When planning tree planting, the risks trees may pose in the future should be minimised. The selection of the type of tree or shrub and its planting must be considered so that root damage to buried mains and services will be avoided.

Planting must also be planned so that damage to trees and shrubs will not be caused by excavations for repair and maintenance to mains and services.

To minimise any interruption to water supplies, unrestricted access to mains and services must be maintained at all times. Extensive root systems must not restrict access to mains and services.

To reduce the risk of damage and in order to ensure access for future maintenance and repair works to our apparatus remain unhindered, the following guidelines for tree planting in close proximity to water mains should be followed.

1. Poplar and Willow trees, having extensive root systems, should not be planted within 10 metres of the water main.
2. Other potentially large trees should not be planted within 6 metres of the main. These would include Ash, Beech, Birch, most conifers, Elm, Horse Chestnut, Lime, Oak, Sycamore, Apple and Pear.
3. Smaller trees should be planted in such a way that the eventual root spread reaches no more than one metre from the main. The use of 'root-proof' membranes or boxes may be considered.
4. No bushes or shrubs should be planted within one metre of the centre line of the main. This includes shallow rooting hedge plants and ground cover plants such as Blackthorn, Broom, Cotoneaster, Elder, Hazel, Laurel, Privet, Snowberry and most ornamental flowering shrubs.
5. In areas where soft fruit is grown, Blackcurrant, Raspberries and Gooseberries may be planted in close proximity to water mains, provided that a path is left clear for inspection access and surveys.