



Code of Best Practice **Drainage inspections for rat activity**

Version 1: April 2023.

British Pest Control Association Code of Best Practice for Drainage inspections for rat activity

A BPCA Code of Best Practice is a set of written rules which explains how people working in our industry should behave in a particular situation. It encompasses relevant legislation but is not the law in itself.

However, were a member to act outside of the norms outlined in the CoBP, they may be subject to disciplinary action or be in breach of legislation. Members must abide by Codes of Best Practice

in their day-to-day work. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the Association.

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Driving excellence in pest management

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Code of Best Practice for Drainage inspections for rat activity

Drainage inspections for detecting faults relating to rat ingress in buildings is a specialist area of work, requiring a high level of skill, experience and care. Those undertaking rat-related drainage inspections are expected to understand the sewer network and the biology and behaviour of Norway rats.

This Code informs the reader of how the industry expects the inspection to be done, considering effectiveness, safety and professionalism.

Legislation

The Water Industry Act (amended) 1991

This Act consolidates enactments relating to the supply of water and the provision of sewerage services. Those whose work involves drain inspections should be aware of the principles of this legislation.

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

When planning and carrying out drainage work, it is important to consider health and safety measures to ensure you or your technicians are safe and well.

You must also consider how other people (such as your customers) do not come to harm when you are working.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require employers to carry out risk assessments where necessary.

Your risk assessment (generic or site-specific) should be created by a competent person and should consider:

- General – drainage inspections

“This Code of Best Practice is intended to outline the legal requirements of drainage inspections, as well as the best professional practice for which the BPCA expects its members to observe.”

- Confined spaces
 - Manual handling
 - Weather conditions
 - Working at height.
- Part of the risk assessment process must include awareness training. Awareness training that should be considered includes:
- Confined spaces
 - Working at height
 - Health and safety relating to sewers.

Professional fundamentals

Pricing, communication and insurance

- 1 Ensure professional and ethical responsibility. Drain inspections can be costly, and only if deemed necessary should advice be given to inspect drains with cameras. It shouldn't be a first resort without a survey.



Drainage inspection, image by Leonard G

- 2 Offer the customer the most practical and cost-effective solution that causes minimal disruption. If you're unsure, always seek a second opinion.

- 3 Keep technical phrases and terms to a minimum unless fully explained and understood by the customer.

- 4 You should have a minimum of £10 million in insurance before carrying out a drainage inspection with cameras.

- 5 A transparent pricing structure should be established, and your customer should know all possible eventualities. For example:
 - The cost of simple inspection
 - The cost of further inspection, if required
 - The potential cost of repair.

- 6 Quotes should specify expected timelines to the completion date.

- 7 Supply terms and conditions with the quote, including guarantees on drain repairs undertaken (if undertaken).

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Rat blockers/one-way valves

8

Confirm that your current insurances cover drainage investigations and repair works, including installing a rat blocker/one-way valve that could affect the flow and cause blockages, floods, water loss, etc.

9

Never place any proofing into drains or sewers the customer does not own. You must seek permission from your customer to install a rat blocker/one-way valve.

10

Only good working and sound one-way valves should be used to prevent dislodging, blockages and damage to the drain.

11

Follow-up/flow checks must be considered after fitting a one-way valve to ensure effectiveness.

12

The customer must be aware that if one-way valves are fitted, maintenance of the device is essential (record this in your report).

Survey and inspection

13

Complete a full survey report using easy-to-understand language, accompanying pictures and a drain map/site plan.

14

All surveys must be recorded, and video files should be shared with the client.

15

Consider the use of water industry-approved reporting software. This may be required for cross communications.

Survey and inspection

16

If subcontractors are to be used, this must be communicated to the customer in writing.

17

Subcontractors must follow this Code of Best Practice.

Training and CPD

18

Technicians working on drain repairs and inspection must have the appropriate knowledge of the laws applying to drainage and understand who owns which drains.

19

The technician in charge of the work must have formal or applicable training. This can be in-house training but must be recorded.

20

Technicians must be up to date with industry changes and standards. This can be delivered via toolbox talks, team meetings and formal training.

Safety

21

Think safety first.

22

Avoid entering a confined space wherever possible.

23

If a confined space is entered, this must be only by a trained and competent person.



A drain left open or broken can be potentially fatal. Technicians should ensure drains are properly fitted to ensure no harm to the public.

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Barriers and safety measures must be put in place around the inspection and drain area.

25

The appropriate tools must be used for the safe lifting of drain covers. The specific tool chosen will be dependent on the weight of the cover.

26

Two technicians should be present for drainage inspections, where practicable.

27

A lone working assessment must be in place where only one technician is present.

28

Ensure drain covers are replaced correctly.

Permissions

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Proper permissions must be granted from the relevant water authority or owner of the drain before inspecting shared or public drains.

Further reading

WRC Manual of Sewer Condition Classification 5th Edition
wrcknowledgestore.co.uk/products/manual-of-sewer-condition-classification-5th-edition

The WRC Drain Repair Book Fourth Edition
wrcknowledgestore.co.uk/products/drain-repair-book-4th-edition

WRC Drain and Sewer Cleaning Manual
wrcknowledgestore.co.uk/products/drain-and-sewer-cleaning-manual

An Inspector's Guide to Sewerage Law (England and Wales Edition)
nhbs.com/an-inspectors-guide-to-sewerage-law-england-and-wales-edition-book

Safety Health and Environmental Awareness (Shea) Drains and Sewers
eusr.co.uk/schemes-programmes/our-industries/water/shea-drains-and-sewers

Revised guidance for national sewer baiting
cieh.org/news/blog/2021/revised-guidance-for-national-sewer-baiting

For further information on training, contact the NADC
nationaldrainageacademy.co.uk



The British Pest Control Association requires that its members meet a range of criteria including strict abidance to all of our Codes of Best Practice. You can search for our members on the BPCA website bpca.org.uk/find

BPCA makes strenuous efforts to ensure the accuracy and current relevance of its publications, which are intended for use by technically competent persons.

However, this does not remove the need for technical and managerial judgement in practical situations. Nor do they confer any immunity or exemption from relevant legal requirements, including by-laws.

If you suspect something in this document is incorrect or out of date, please report it to technical@bpca.org.uk.

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