

Main rivers

Main rivers are usually larger streams and rivers, but some of them are smaller watercourses of local significance. In England Defra decides which watercourses are the main rivers, and the Welsh Government does this in Wales. Main rivers are marked on an official document called the main river map. Environment Agency local offices have copies of these maps. Main rivers can include any structure that controls or regulates the flow of water in, into or out of the channel.

([Definition from EA Living on the edge](#))

Ordinary watercourse

An ordinary watercourse is every river, stream, ditch, drain, cut, dyke, sluice, sewer (other than a public sewer) and passage through which water flows, but which does not form part of a main river. The local authority or Internal Drainage Board has powers on ordinary watercourses similar to the Environment Agency's powers on main rivers.

([Definition from EA Living on the edge](#))

Surface water runoff

Surface water runoff is rainwater, including snow. It is water on the surface of the ground, whether or not it is moving, which has not entered a watercourse, drainage system or public sewer.

([Definition from EA Living on the edge](#))

Culvert

A covered channel or pipe designed to prevent the obstruction of a watercourse or drainage path by an artificial construction.

([Definition from EA Living on the edge](#))

Drain

A pipe or channel that is used to carry away waste matter and water from a building.

Ditches

A narrow channel dug at the side of a road or field, to hold or carry away water.

Sewer

A large pipe, usually underground, that is used for carrying waste water and human waste away from buildings to a place where they can be safely got rid of.