

# Collection: Main river map for England: proposed changes and decisions

*Updated:* Addition of the published legal decision notices of main river stretches

## **Main river map**

The main river map shows which rivers in England are designated as 'main rivers'. Other rivers are called 'ordinary watercourses'.

The main river map also shows where the Environment Agency intends to make changes. These are highlighted as 'additions' and 'deletions'.

Main rivers are usually larger rivers and streams. The Environment Agency carries out maintenance, improvement or construction work on main rivers to manage flood risk.

Lead local flood authorities, district councils and internal drainage boards carry out flood risk management work on ordinary watercourses.

[View the main river map.](#)

In England, the Environment Agency decides which watercourses are main rivers. It consults with other risk management authorities and the public before making these decisions. The main river map is then updated to reflect these changes.

A river's designation may affect you if you:

- live by a river
- own land or property by a river
- need to carry out works in or near a river

[Read guidance about the rights and responsibilities of riverside ownership.](#)

## **Why we change the main river map**

There are 2 reasons why the Environment Agency changes the main river map.

### **Designation changes**

This is where the designation of the river changes to or from a main river. This means there is a change in who has legal power to carry out flood risk management work.

## **Factual changes**

This is where the Environment Agency amends sections of the main river map to reflect changes in the environment or to correct inaccuracies. These changes only correct the line of the main river and do not change who has legal power to carry out flood risk management work.

## **Decision Notices**

Following the public consultation for changes, the Environment Agency takes decisions on whether to transfer flood risk management activities for watercourses, either to a main river or to an ordinary watercourse.

The following list of designation de-mainment changes are part of the [Rationalising the main river network programme](#).