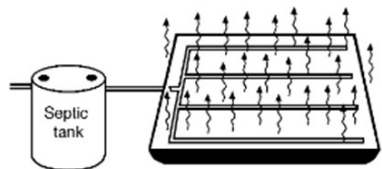


Protecting your health, your environment and system

Some simple tips which can help you get the best out of your septic system:

- Ensure that your system is desludged every 3-5 years by an authorised liquid waste contractor.
- Mow and maintain your disposal area to prevent excessive grass growth and to maximize soil transpiration.
- Use biodegradable liquid detergents low in sodium and phosphorous.
- Minimise quantities of bleaches, disinfectants, oils and other similar chemicals into your on-site Sewage Management System.
- Prevent foreign materials such as nappies, condoms or other sanitary items entering your Onsite Sewage Management System.
- Exclude vehicles, children and grazing stock from around septic tanks or disposal areas as they can damage tanks, compact absorption trenches and come into contact with micro-organisms that can cause illness.
- Plant trees away from your system as their roots can damage pipes and tanks.
- If your system fails and begins to discharge wastewater from the tank or absorption area call a plumber as soon as possible to organise repairs. Ensure that Council is kept informed as often replacement trenches will require approval.
- If you operate a Aerated Wastewater System ensure that your system is serviced regularly (generally quarterly) and all pumps, blowers and disinfection chambers are checked and replaced as required.



The effluent flows through perforated pipes into a lined gravel bed, covered with turf. The water is removed by evaporation and transpiration through the grasses.

Approval and inspection of your on-site sewage management system

On-site sewage management systems often fail because of the inability of the site to cope with effluent absorption due to the type of soil, overloading of the systems, inappropriate design and installation and poor maintenance.

Recent State and Local Government surveys indicate up to 70% of new systems may not be working efficiently.

Under the Local Government Act 1993 every on-site sewage management system in NSW is required to have an inspection to ensure it is not having an adverse impact on the health of people or the surrounding environment. All types of systems require an:

- Approval to install ; and
- Approval to operate* (includes within 60 days of change of ownership.)

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What you need to know if you are installing or operating an onsite sewage management system



www.armidaleregional.nsw.gov.au

How to protect our community and environment by managing your onsite sewage management system

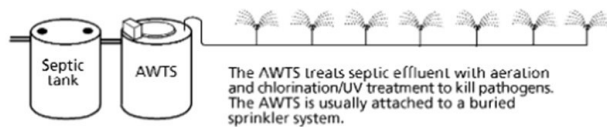
There are several types and brands of onsite sewage management systems available on the market. The two most common types of systems are aerated wastewater treatment systems and the typical septic tank and absorption trench systems.

Aerated wastewater treatment systems

Aerated wastewater treatment systems (AWTS) are small scale on-site sewage treatment plants. Through a series of treatment processes, household water is treated to a high level into non potable water that can be used on lawns and gardens. Treated water is irrigated via means of a sprinkler system or subsurface drip system.

Aerated Wastewater systems require regular servicing by a suitably qualified tradesperson and require electricity to operate.

Irrigation areas associated with AWTS must be well maintained and correctly sized to prevent wastewater pooling, runoff and accidental spray drift to neighboring properties.



Septic tank and absorption trench systems

A septic tank is a wastewater treatment device that provides the first stage of treatment of wastewater. This tank is connected to an absorption trench that disposes of secondary treated effluent underground in a safe manner, as the system cannot treat wastewater adequately to allow it to be used for surface irrigation.

Absorption trenches usually have a working life of 15 years, however they will fail much sooner if they are not maintained correctly.

Approval to Install

New or replacement systems require approval from Council under s68 of the Local Government Act 1993 and be accredited by NSW Health.

The approval process ensures that systems are designed and installed in accordance with specific requirements that reflect best practice as outlined in AS/NZS 1547:2012 (Standard for Onsite Sewage Management) and achieve the performance objectives required under the Local Government Act 1993.

Approval to Operate

Landowners with any type of on-site sewage management system (including new or replacement systems) need to obtain approval from Council to operate that system.

An inspection and assessment focusing on various environmental factors, system performance, hydraulic loading and site specific factors will determine the risk level and operational approval period, as detailed in Council's On-site Wastewater Management Policy (the policy can be viewed on Council's website).

- Low Risk (12 Yearly approval)
- Medium Risk (6 Yearly approval)
- High Risk (3 Yearly approval)

Once an inspection is completed and the system deemed to be satisfactory, an Operational Approval containing conditions that outline the best management practices for the on-site sewage management system that it relates to will be issued.

Upon or nearing expiration, an inspection will be required before a new Operational Approval is issued. Failing to possess or comply with the conditions of an Operational Approval can result in penalty or prosecution under the Local Government Act 1993.

Failing systems are a risk to the health of people and the environment through the spread of pathogenic bacteria and viruses.

Wastewater from a failing system can cause serious environmental impacts by causing water pollution,

introducing E. coli, nitrogen and phosphorous into natural and manmade waterbodies. For example, in 1996 failing septic tanks in the Wallis Lakes area on the Central NSW Coast were linked to contaminated oysters from a local farm, resulting in a major food poisoning incident resulting in several deaths.

Inspections

The inspection process aims to ensure ongoing operational compliance of onsite sewage management systems.

Council is committed to ensuring systems operating within the area are operating satisfactory and do not pose a risk to public or environmental health.

Prior to an inspection taking place, landowners will be informed in writing of the proposed inspection period. If the period is unsuitable or you wish to be present during the inspection you will need to organize a suitable time and date as per details in your inspection advice.

If the owner of the premises is not available or the property is leased, the inspection the inspection schedule will still be adhered to.

Council Officers can lawfully enter property under s193 of the Local Government Act 1993 to conduct inspections of Onsite Sewage Management Systems if the owner of the premises is not available.

Fees

Fees are applicable for the inspection of onsite sewage management systems and the administrative function associated with issuing an Operational Approval. These fees are based on a fee for service – full cost recovery formula.

The revenue raised from such fees enables to Council to manage its sewage management responsibilities, supervision of plumbers and service agents, undertake education programs and practical support to assist landowners to better manage their onsite systems.