



Septic Tanks

If your home is not connected to Council's reticulated sewerage system (or town sewer), then you are likely to dispose of your wastewater via an on-site sewage management system. An on-site sewage management system is a term used to refer to:

- Septic systems;
- Aerated wastewater treatment systems (AWTS); and
- Pump-out systems.

What Approvals do I need to have an On-site Sewage Management System (OSMS)?

Application to Install

An application and approval to install an On-site Sewage Management system is required when installing a new system or amending an existing system.

When building a new house, you or your plumber should complete this form at the Development Application stage.

Approval to Operate

This is an ongoing approval required under State Government legislation that must be applied for through Council.

It requires the landowner to take all reasonable steps to minimise transmission of disease, pollution of water and degradation of land.

Council is required to ensure each system is working efficiently. Council will notify you when there are inspections taking place in your area.

Types of Systems

Septic Systems

Septic tanks treat both greywater (from shower, sinks and washing machines) and blackwater (toilet and kitchen water). They provide only limited treatment through the settling of solids and the flotation of fats and grease. Bacteria in the tank break down the solids over a period of time. Wastewater that has been treated in a septic tank can only be applied to the land through a



covered soil absorption system, as the effluent is still too contaminated for above ground or near surface irrigation.

Aerated Wastewater Treatment Systems (AWTS)

AWTS treat all household wastewater and have several treatment compartments. The first is like a septic tank, but in the second compartment air is mixed with wastewater to assist bacteria to break down solids. A third compartment allows settling of more solids and a final chlorination contact chamber allows disinfection. Some AWTS are constructed with all compartments inside a single tank. The effluent produced must be disposed of through either sub-surface lawn irrigation or surface sprinklers in raised mulched garden beds with adequate signage.

Pump-Out Systems

Pump- systems involve the preliminary on-site treatment of wastewater in a septic tank, followed by collection and transportation of the treated wastewater to an off-site effluent management facility. Pump-out systems use road tankers to transport the effluent.

Help protect your health and the Environment

Poorly maintained or managed on-site sewage management systems are a serious source of water pollution and may present a health risk, cause odours and attract vermin and insects. What you put down your drains and toilet has a lot to do with how well your on-site sewage management system performs.

Maintenance of your sewage management system needs to be done regularly to ensure it continues to work effectively, to protect the public's health and the environment. The following is a guide to the types of things you should and should not do to maintain a healthy on-site sewage management system.

Tips to maintain a Healthy On-site Sewage Management System

Do

- Learn how your sewage management system works and its operational and maintenance requirements.
- Learn the location and layout of your sewage management system.
- Have your AWTS (if installed) inspected and serviced four times per year and by an approved contractor. Other systems should be inspected at least once every year.
- Keep a record of desludging, inspections and other maintenance.
- Have your septic tank or AWTS deslugged every three years to prevent sludge build up, which may clog the pipes.
- Conserve water around the house. This will reduce the amount of wastewater produced that needs to be treated.
- Discuss with Council the adequacy of your existing sewage management system if you are considering house extensions for increased occupancy.



Don't

- Let children or pets play on land application areas.
- Water fruit and vegetables with effluent.
- Extract untreated groundwater for cooking and drinking.
- Put large quantities of bleaches, disinfectants, whiteners, nappy soakers and spot removers into your system via the sink, washing machine or toilet.
- Allow any foreign material such as nappies, sanitary napkins, condoms and other hygienic products to enter the system.
- Put fats, oils and food wastes down the drain.
- Install or use a garbage grinder or spa bath if your system is not designed for it.

A brochure on the different systems e.g. Septic Tanks, AWTS are available from Customer First Centre, if more information is required.

Application forms are available on Council's website www.kempsey.nsw.gov.au or from the Customer First Centre.

**For further information and advice on
Septic Systems
Contact:**

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