Onsite wastewater management systems

Factsheet for new owners

Congratulations on your recent property purchase.

As your property relies on an onsite wastewater management system (septic tank) to safely dispose of all sewage from your property, Hepburn Shire Council is taking this opportunity to advise you of some easy things to do to ensure your onsite wastewater management system continues to work as intended.

Learn as much about your system as possible

It’s important to know:

* which type of system is being used at your property
* where the system and effluent disposal lines or trenches are located
* the maximum daily flow that your system can cope with.

Minimise the amount of wastewater your household generates

Minimising the amount of wastewater prevents your system from overflowing. It is recommended that you:

* install water-saving devices on showers, taps and toilets.
* fix leaking taps.
* only run your washing machine when there is a full load and spread the loads out over the week.

Consider which household products go down the drain or toilet

Many household cleaning products can destroy the bacteria in the system that breaks down the waste. We recommend that you:

* look for detergents, cleaning products and household chemicals that are safe to use with onsite wastewater management systems.
* keep the use of bleaches and disinfectants to a minimum.
* do not flush medications, paint, solvents, or pesticides down your drains.
* make sure sanitary items such as tampons, pads and nappies are disposed of via your general rubbish bin.
* do not pour cooking oils and fats down the sink, instead let them cool and solidify, or use a paper towel to absorb them, before placing them in the general rubbish bin.
* make sure food scraps do not get washed down your drains. Use a food strainer to catch and dispose of solid items and regularly clean your drains.

Have your system regularly maintained by a professional

* Older systems require desludging every 3-5 years.
* Newer systems often require quarterly servicing.

Pay attention to key warning signs of system failure

Warning signs of failure may include:

* The absorption field becoming wet with wastewater pooling on the surface.
* Wastewater runoff from the disposal area.
* A smell of effluent near or from the system.
* Drains or toilets running slowly.

Short stay accommodation

If you are planning to use the property for short stay accommodation, please be aware that increased occupancy will put your system at risk of failing.

If you have any questions, or you would like to find out more about your onsite wastewater management system, please contact Council on 5438 2306 and ask to speak to an Environmental Health Officer, or visit [www.hepburn.vic.gov.au/wastewater-management](http://www.hepburn.vic.gov.au/wastewater-management)