

Best Practice OSSM Maintenance

Do not put bleach and large amounts of disinfectants and cleaning products down the drain to maintain the systems bacteria health.

Do not put fats and oils down the drain to prevent your system from clogging-up.

Do not compact the soil with heavy equipment to maintain good system flow.

Do install water saving devices to reduce the pressure on your OSSM.

Do minimise wastewater surges going to your septic system by spreading-out laundry washing during the week, rather than all on one day.



Example of a failing septic absorption trench

For an application form for an approval to operate a system of sewage management & current fees

Visit Council's customer service centre or Council's website at:
www.wsc.nsw.gov.au

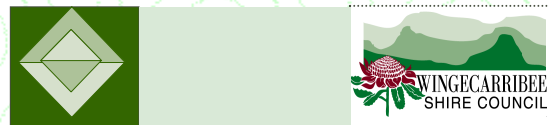
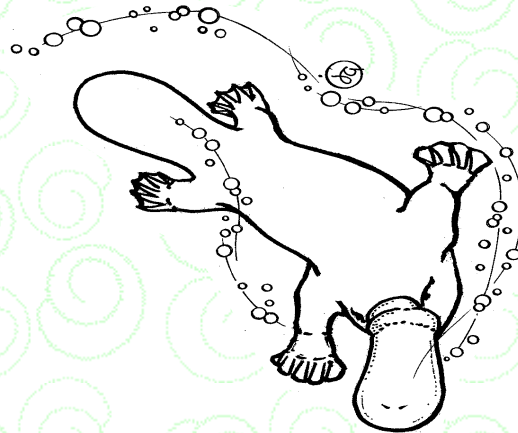
For further information please visit:

Septic Safe :
www.dlg.nsw.gov.au/DLG/Documents/information/onsite.pdf

Environment & Health Protection Guidelines:
www.dlg.nsw.gov.au/DLG/Documents/information/ssguide.pdf

Safer Community Cleaner Environment

It is important to keep an eye on your system between routine maintenance. If you notice any problems please contact your local plumber or service agent.



Wingecarribee Shire Council
Civic Centre
Elizabeth Street
Moss Vale NSW 2577

Phone: 02 4868 0888

Fax: 02 4869 1203

E-mail: wscmail@wsc.nsw.gov.au

WSC 2011/ES001

March 2011



Home Owner Responsibilities for Backyard Septic & Sewage Systems



Wingecarribee Shire Council

Septic ✓ Safe Wingecarribee

If your home is not connected to the sewerage system, you will have some type of On-site Sewage Management System (OSSM).

Septic systems treat and dispose of household wastewater in your backyard, including black-water (toilet) and greywater (bathroom, laundry & kitchen).



Approval to Operate:

- * An OSSM must have a current **Approval to Operate**. As the homeowner you must obtain this approval from Council every 2-5 years depending on the level of risk associated with the system (fees are applicable).
- * An **Approval to Operate** sets out basic requirements to keep your septic system working well including renewal periods for the approval. This is to minimise potential impacts of an OSSM on the local water catchment and health of the community.
- * If you are **buying or selling a property** with a OSSM check that the Approval to Operate for the property is current. If you don't have a current approval you will need to make an application as this can impede on the sale of the property (fees are applicable).

How to Manage a Septic Tank/Absorption Trench

A septic tank system provides primary treatment of wastewater by separating-out solids prior to the disposal of the treated liquid effluent to an absorption trench. The liquid from a septic tank still contains many pathogens and potential viruses, and therefore must be disposed of below-ground to an absorption trench.

An Absorption Trench provides for disposal of septic tank effluent underground thereby preventing odour and contact with humans, pets and livestock.

Recommended maintenance to minimise health & environmental hazards:

- Tank to be pumped-out every 3-5 years by a licensed contractor.
- Trench area mowed and weeded.
- Do not place structures or drive your vehicle over the absorption trench area.
- Exclude livestock from the trench area.
- Do not use a diversion hose to direct untreated laundry greywater onto your garden/lawn.
- Grease-traps should be cleaned out at least once a year by a licensed contractor.

Warning signs!

- * Overflow from the tank or from any leaking/broken pipes.
- * Wet boggy areas or foul odours over trench area.
- * 'Backing-up' in the house drains.

Contact a licensed plumber to repair a failure with your septic system as soon as you notice a problem.



How to manage an Aerated Wastewater Treatment System

An Aerated Wastewater Treatment System (AWTS) provides a higher quality of treatment than a standard septic tank, due to additional treatment including aeration and disinfection. The secondary treated effluent from the tank is typically irrigated onto your garden with sprinklers.

The irrigation area of this system is required to comply with any approved Council conditions of consent. Maintaining the AWTS with an adequate number of sprinklers will help to prevent the ponding of treated effluent. Growing edible food crops is not recommended on your treated effluent irrigation area.

Recommended maintenance to minimise health & environmental hazards:

- Routine service every 3 months by an appropriately qualified service agent that includes monitoring and maintenance of the treated effluent sprinkler irrigation area.
- Do not locate sprinklers in close proximity to property boundaries, avoid any potential spray or spray-drift from leaving your property. Buffer zones need to be complied with.
- The irrigation area needs to be adequately landscaped and not used for recreation.
- The power supply and irrigation pipeline need to remain connected to the AWTS tank at all times.
- Be careful not to damage your irrigation pipeline while lawn mowing.
- Only use AWTS hoses and fittings for the irrigation pipeline.
- Signs should be installed on the edge of the irrigation area (e.g. 'Reclaimed effluent in this area, Do not drink, Avoid contact').

Warning signs!

- * A triggered alarm or warning light associated with the AWTS.
- * Smelly and/or over-saturated areas.
- * Leaking or broken irrigation pipeline, or any blocked sprinklers.

Contact service agent or licensed plumber to repair as soon as you notice a problem.