

Approval to operate

The NSW Government introduced the SepticSafe Program in 1998 to help property owners and Councils keep onsite sewage management systems working efficiently and safely. All owners of onsite sewage management systems are now required to apply to Council for an Approval to Operate (license). This Approval is a means to assist Council monitor and manage the cumulative impact of sewage pollution in local areas. The Approval also ensures that property owners are aware of their responsibility to efficiently operate and regularly maintain their system.

Further Information

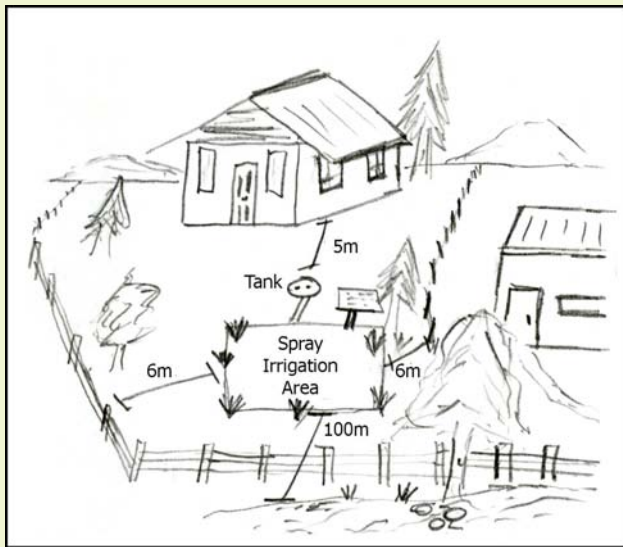
Further information can be obtained from;
Environment & Health Protection Guidelines—
On-site Sewage Management for Single Households
Lithgow City Council website
www.lithgow.nsw.gov.au/
Water for Life
www.waterforlife.nsw.gov.au/
NSW Health
www.health.nsw.gov.au/
Sydney Catchment Authority
www.sca.nsw.gov.au/
Department of Water & Energy
www.dwe.nsw.gov.au/
Water Efficient Products
www.waterrating.gov.au/products/index.html



(02) 6354 9999
(02) 6351 4259
council@lithgow.nsw.gov.au

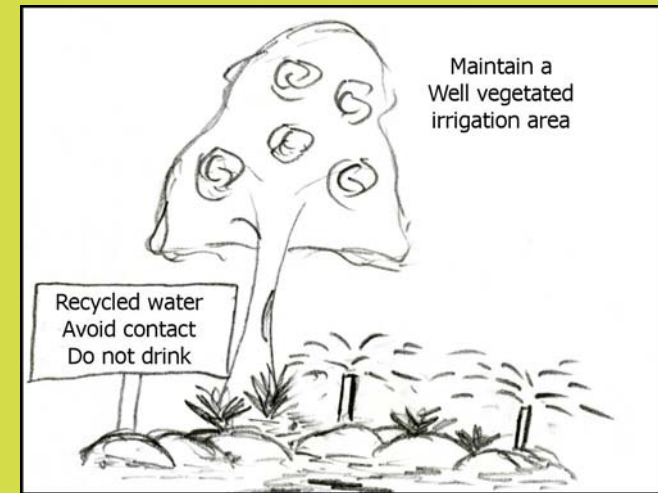
To assist in this, the Department of Local Government determined that surface spray irrigation areas should be located at least:

- 100m from permanent surface waters;
- 250m from any domestic ground water well;
- 40m from any other waters;
- 6m if area is up-gradient or 3m if area is down-gradient from driveways and property boundaries;
- 3m from pathways; and
- 6m from a swimming pool



Aerated Wastewater Treatment System

Lithgow City Council



Health Warning

Effluent from any septic system may be a health hazard. Children and/or pets should not play in the absorption or spray field areas.

Help Protect our environment

Your septic system has an effect on the environment. By ensuring that your septic system is working correctly you can do your part in helping to protect our environment.



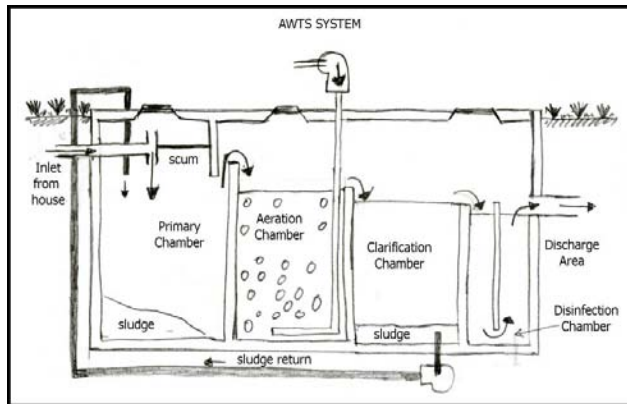
Looking after your AWTS

What is an AWTS?

An Aerated Wastewater Treatment System (AWTS) is a small scale onsite sewage treatment plant. Through a series of treatment and disinfectant processes, household wastewater is transformed into non-potable water that is distributed on lawns and gardens.

How does an AWTS work?

An AWTS consists of one or two wastewater tanks, which contain a series of chambers. Wastewater enters the primary chamber where solids settle to the bottom to form a sludge layer. The scum layer, containing fats and greases, collects at the top of the chamber and the clarified wastewater flows from between the two layers to the aeration chamber. In the second chamber, the wastewater is aerated and broken down



further by biological activity. The clarification chamber allows further clarification of the wastewater through the settling of any remaining solids. The treated effluent is finally disinfected in a chlorination or UV chamber and irrigated through fixed hoses across lawns or gardens either above ground or via a subsurface system.

How to maintain your AWTS

The effective operation of your AWTS is dependant on regular maintenance. At present, all AWTS are required to be maintained and serviced by a qualified service technician on a quarterly basis at the cost of the owner. The service reports must be forwarded to Council. It is essential that the irrigation area of your AWTS is well maintained. The area must be correctly sized to allow effective disposal of treated effluent on your property. Treated effluent must not run to, or be sprayed onto neighbouring properties. The AWTS must be operated continuously; power to the system must not be turned off. Your disposal area must clearly display a sign "Recycled Water, Avoid Contact, Do Not Drink".

Owners responsibility

The owner of the AWTS is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the tank/s do not leak;
- Promptly fixing the system when problems are detected;
- Ensuring that the system is inspected quarterly by a qualified service technician;
- Desludging the system when solid levels become too high;
- Lodging an application for an Approval (license) to operate every five years;
- Complying with Council's request for inspections or maintenance.

Maintaining system health

There are a number of other things you, can do to maintain a healthy onsite wastewater management system.

Avoid or minimise cleaning agents, detergents, disinfectants, bleaches, alkalis, oil, paint, petrol, acids, degreasers, photographic chemicals, cosmetics, lotions, pesticides and herbicides. Even small amounts of these chemicals can upset chemical and biological activity within the system.

Do not place disposable nappies, tissues, sanitary napkins, tampons, paper towels, plastics, cigarette butts, bones, coffee grinds into the system. These materials can potentially overload the system or cause pump failure.

Do not use the treated water to water vegetable gardens, fill swimming pools, or other domestic purposes.

Do not turn off the power to your AWTS

Do not put fats and oils down drains and sinks

Do practice water conservation to avoid overloading your system

Do ensure that the system receives servicing following the specified regime (this varies for systems, but for AWTS servicing is required by a service technician quarterly).

Do monitor your system for signs of ill-health including: unusual or foul odours, leaks or overflow from the tank, pooling of wastes or liquid in and around the disposal area. Contact your service technician if you think there is a problem with your system.

Do use products that are labelled as biodegradable or septic-safe

Do use alternative cleaning products such as bicarbonate of soda, pure soap, borax, vinegar, lemon juice, cloudy ammonia etc.

Please be aware that taking some medications (such as antibiotics) may also impact on the effectiveness of your system.