

sewage management



pump - out



◇ **how does a pump-out system work?**

All household wastewater enters the septic tank. Most of the solids settle to the bottom of the tank to form a sludge layer, and the majority of fats and grease collects at the top of the tank to form a scum layer. Micro-organisms within the septic tank break down solid matter in the sludge and scum layers over time. The liquid effluent between the scum and sludge layers flows from the septic tank into the collection well where it is pumped out periodically by Council contractors.

◇ **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 sewage management systems are now required to apply to Council for an Approval to Operate. This Approval is a means by which the Council can 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.

In unsewered areas, choosing an appropriate method for the treatment and disposal of household wastewater is critical in preserving the health of the public and the environment. The pump-out system is one such way to achieve effective sewage management on residential properties.

◇ **what is a pump-out system?**

A pump-out system is typically installed on residential and industrial properties where the area of land available for wastewater treatment and disposal is too small for the volume of wastewater generated. The system consists of a primary septic tank and collection well. Wastewater collects in the septic tank, and flows over to the collection well, where it is stored prior to removal by Council contractors.

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◇ maintaining your septic system

What you put down your drains and toilets has a lot to do with how well your pump-out system performs. Poorly maintained systems are a serious source of water pollution and may present health risks, cause odours and attract vermin and insects. The following is a guide to the types of things you should and should not do with your system.

◇ further information

Department of Local Government 'SepticSafe Program'
- www.dlg.nsw.gov.au/dlg/dlghome/dlg_home.asp

Local Government (Approvals) Regulation 1999
- www.austlii.edu.au

Approval to Operate Application Form
- www.hornsby.nsw.gov.au

do's

- *Learn the location of your sewage management system, including the draw off pipe and discharge point;*
- *Have your septic tank desludged on a regular basis;*
- *Conserving water used around the house will reduce the amount of wastewater produced and will therefore reduce your pump-out costs; and*
- *Use biodegradable liquid detergents, such as concentrates with low phosphorous.*

don'ts

- *Don't put large quantities of bleaches, disinfectants, whiteners, nappy soakers and spot removers into your pump-out system, via the sink, washing machine or laundry;*
- *Don't allow any foreign materials such as nappies, sanitary napkins, condoms and other hygiene products to enter the system;*
- *Don't use more than the recommended amounts of detergents; and*
- *Don't put fats and oils down the drains and keep food waste out of your system.*



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FURTHER INFORMATION

General information on pump-out systems can be obtained from the Environmental Health & Protection Team on **9847 6829**.
Information on the pump-out service offered by Council can be obtained from the Waste Management Team on **9847 4856**.