

FACT SHEET



– Knowing your pump-out septic tank

(02) 4677 1100

wollondilly.nsw.gov.au



WHAT ARE THEY?

In unsewered areas pump out systems are installed where there is not enough area available to dispose of wastewater generated on the property.

HOW DO THEY WORK?

Pump-out involves an effluent removal contractor connecting to a suction line to remove all liquid effluent from the collection well in a specialised pump out truck.

When the septic tank reaches 2/3 full it needs to be pumped out. Generally, pumping out should occur every 1-2 weeks, depending on the size of the tank and the people in the house.

The solid waste stays in the tank to be broken down by bacteria. To keep the bacteria alive the tank needs 3 layers -

- A floating scum layer at the top made of oil and grease and light solids
- The sludge layer on the bottom made of the solids which are not dissolved.
- The liquid effluent layer between the sludge and scum layers

MAINTENANCE

The liquid from the tanks needs to be pumped-out every 1-4 weeks. If the tank fills up and is not pumped-out the sewage will back up in toilets and showers and/or there will be a smelly overflow.

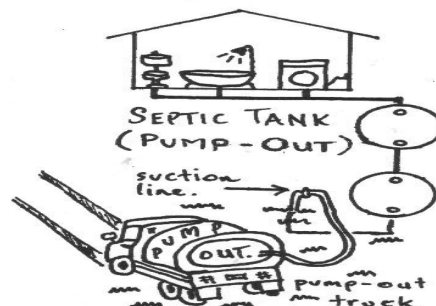
DO ✓

- ✓ Have the liquid effluent pumped out every 1-4 weeks.
- ✓ Keep all pump out receipts and dockets
- ✓ Ensure you always have a current Approval to Operate.
- ✓ Use environmentally friendly, biodegradable detergents and cleaning products.
- ✓ Conserve water in the home to avoid overloading your septic system.
- ✓ Have septic tanks solids de-sludged (pumped out) every 3-5 years.
- ✓ Do have annual checks by your contractor of the tank structure and for the presence of blockages.

REGULATIONS

All owners of sewage management systems in NSW are required to hold a current Approval to Operate. This Approval allows Councils to monitor and manage the cumulative impact of sewage pollution.

Approvals are granted for periods of 1, 3 or 5 years depending on the risk the system poses to public health and the environment.



DO NOT ✗

- ✗ Divert effluent out of the tank.
- ✗ Use products that contain bleach, ammonia, antiseptic, antibacterial or high strength detergents.
- ✗ Discard any chemicals, pesticides, or herbicides down the drain
- ✗ Use more than the recommended amounts of detergents.
- ✗ Flush non-degradable products such as face wipes, hygiene products, nappies or condoms.
- ✗ Remove the kamlock-fitting device from the suction line.

IS YOUR PUMP-OUT SEPTIC HEALTHY?

There is a problem with your pump-out system if you note any of the following occurring -

- There is a strong effluent odour present.
- The area surrounding the septic tank and/or suction line is damp or soggy, or effluent water is noted to be pooling on the soil surface.
- Long grass and weeds are growing around the septic tank and/or suction line.
- Drains and toilets take time to clear, and/or water backing up in showers and toilets.