



GUIDE NOTES FOR THE TREATMENT AND DISPOSAL OF DOMESTIC WASTEWATER IN HUME CITY

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1. Introduction

In the absence of reticulated sewerage it is necessary for unsewered properties to effectively treat and dispose of domestic wastewater on site.

This is achieved by the use of **on-site domestic wastewater treatment facilities**, or **septic tank systems**. The approval and monitoring of on-site domestic wastewater treatment systems, is carried out by Council's Environmental Health Officers.

Council's Environmental Health Officers ensure that property owners install and maintain on-site domestic wastewater treatment systems in accordance with relevant legislation, Codes of Practice and Council policy.

Effective management of wastewater prevents disease-causing pathogens, which are present in wastewater, from adversely affecting health and wellbeing of people that might come in contact with it. Also, it prevents wastewater from polluting ground and surface water and spoiling the amenity.

Installation of on-site domestic wastewater treatment systems is regulated by a permitting system. This guideline will provide you with the necessary information about the process required to obtain a permit to install a system.

2. Permits

It is mandated by Part IXB of the Environment Protection Act 1970, that for the Installation or Alteration of domestic wastewater treatment systems, Council must issue two permits: A "Permit to Install" and a Certificate of "Approval to Use"

2.1 "Permit to Install" or "Permit to Alter" a Septic Tank System

- A "Permit to Install" a Septic Tank System, in the case of new installations, or
- A "Permit to Alter" a Septic Tank System, in the case of alterations or additions to existing domestic wastewater treatment systems.

A "Permit to Install" will expire 2 years from the date of issue unless:

- the system is constructed to the satisfaction of Council and issued with a Certificate of "Approval to Use" a Septic Tank System; or
- an application to extend the Permit is approved by Council.

2.2 Certificate of "Approval to Use" a Septic Tank System

Prior to using your installed or altered domestic wastewater treatment system, you are required to obtain a Certificate of "Approval to Use" a Septic Tank System. In order to obtain this Certificate, an Environmental Health Officer must be requested to undertake a final inspection of the installation and the following paperwork must be forwarded to the Council:

- An "as constructed" plan of the installation;
- A copy of the completed "Plumbers Certificate of Compliance" from the plumber or drainer who installed the system; and
- A copy of a "Commissioning Certificate" for treatment plants and
- An Energy Safe Victoria "Certificate of Electrical Safety" from the electrician for the installation of any electrical components.

It is an offence under the Act to construct, install or alter a septic tank system without a Permit and to use a septic tank system without a Certificate of "Approval to Use".

3. Application Process

To obtain a "Permit to Install" or a "Permit to Alter" a septic tank system (domestic wastewater treatment system) you are required to submit an application. This application form can be found in the Hume City Council Domestic Wastewater Information Pack or on Hume City Council Website .

Council's Health Services Unit will only receive applications relating to systems that are approved for use in Victoria and have an EPA Certificate of Approval (please see www.epa.vic.gov.au for a list of approved systems). These are domestic wastewater systems and are designed to discharge less than 5,000 litres of effluent daily. Applications for larger systems will be referred to the Environment Protection Authority, as they might require a works approval.

Please ensure that all relevant details are included in the application form and that it is properly signed and dated. Your application is to be submitted together with a set of detailed plans of the allotment, proposed septic tank system and a Land Capability Assessment (LCA).

Incomplete or inadequate application and support documentation will result in request for further information, and as a result cause delays in the issue of your permit.

4. Plans

Two (2) copies of the site plan should be included with your application form and must contain the following information:

- The location of the premises including the street number or lot number.
- The dimensions of all boundaries.
- The locations and dimensions of all buildings or proposed buildings, streams, water tanks, swimming pools, excavations, driveways, stormwater drains, water pipes and existing tank systems.
- The location of the proposed septic tank/ treatment plant & effluent disposal system.
- The position of north and
- The fall of the land.

A copy of the floor plan(s) of the proposed dwelling/structure should also be submitted with your application.

NB: Where there is a Building Envelope over the land, all parts of the Septic Tank system must be located entirely within that Building Envelope unless specific Council Statutory Planning approval is otherwise obtained.

5. Land Capability Assessment

Land Capability Assessment (LCA) is a soil quality report, and it should be prepared by an appropriately qualified and experienced professional. Data collected and analysed will:

- Identify key site and soil features of your land, and any constraints that the land has. This information is used to determine if your site is capable of managing your household's wastewater within allotment boundaries in a sustainable manner;
- Help identify a management program for you to put in place to minimise the health and environmental impacts of on-site wastewater management

What should the LCA contain?

The LCA should contain:

- General information about the site, such as the area and title details, local government area, nature of the development and anticipated wastewater load;
- A scaled site plan showing, as a minimum, contours, boundaries, location of watercourses, location of any buildings, the wastewater treatment system, and the area available for the application of the treated effluent;
- A description of the nature of the key site and soil features;
- A table that lists these features and gives a rating for each in terms of the degree to which the characteristic could limit the site for on-site wastewater management. The worst rating for an individual feature then determines the overall site rating.
- This overall rating provides the land capability of the site and allows the person preparing the report to recommend a management program, which includes the type of wastewater system that could be used, and method of applying the treated effluent to the land; and
- Recommendations for land application of the treated effluent should be based on a calculation of the water balance, which takes into account the climate of the area (amount of rainfall) and the expected amount of wastewater to be generated by the household.

If you need more information, Hume City Council's Health Services Unit can show you a "model" LCA as an example and a comprehensive checklist of information required in a typical LCA or you could also refer to the EPA Victoria website (www.epa.vic.gov.au)

6. Examination of Proposal and Issuing of Permits

Once Council receives your application and all the necessary information, Environmental Health Officer will examine your application and proposal against the relevant criteria as set out in the Septic Tanks Code of Practice, the relevant Australia/New Zealand Standards, Council's specifications and EPA guidelines.

Provided that no further information is needed from the applicant or no alterations are required to the proposal, Council will issue a "Permit to Install" or "Permit to Alter" a Septic Tank System within 10 working days of receipt of the application.

You will receive your permit together with an endorsed copy of your plan(s) and permit conditions.

7. Inspection Process

Inspections of the system are mandatory.

Generally, a site will be inspected prior to a "Permit to Install" being issued, a progress inspection will be conducted during the installation and a final inspection when the system has been completed.

During these inspections, Council's Environmental Health Officer will assess the components of the installation including drains, primary and secondary treatment systems, effluent disposal systems, and land application areas; and at the conclusion of the installation determine that the system is operational and in compliance with the requirements.

At least 24 hours notice is required to book an inspection with the Environmental Health Officer. Bookings can be made by contacting Council's Health Services Unit on 9205 2599.

When booking your final please ensure that you have:

- An "as constructed" plan of the installation;
- A copy of the completed "Plumbers Certificate of Compliance" from the plumber or drainer who installed the system; and
- Where a mechanical secondary treatment system is installed, a copy of a "Commissioning Certificate" and a copy of an Energy Safe Victoria "Certificate of Electrical Safety" from the electrician who installed any electrical components.

8. Maintenance

To successfully maintain your waste water treatment system, you have to ensure that the effluent disposal area remains reserved for that purpose only. You cannot drive on it, build on it, keep stock on it, or use it as a vegetable garden.

Children should not be allowed to use the area for playing, as there will be a risk of exposure to treated waste water, or damage to the disposal area itself.

You will also have to ensure that septic tank is pumped out at regular intervals. In case that you have installed a treatment plant, you will be required to have regular maintenance checks, by qualified contractors. Those maintenance reports will also need to be sent to council.