

Who desludges my septic tank?

- A licensed waste disposal contractor must perform the desludging and sludge disposal. No person should attempt to access the septic tank without adequate ventilation due to build-up of potentially lethal gases.
- Septic tanks are desludged by using special pumping equipment and these services are advertised under “Septic Tank Cleaning Services” in the Yellow Pages of the Telephone Directory.
- Please note, it is illegal to discharge contents from a septic tank or soakage system to ground surface level for any reason.

To access a full copy of the Onsite Wastewater Systems Code, access the following link:

<http://www.health.sa.gov.au/pehs/branches/wastewater/new-regulations-and-codes.htm>

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Septic Tank Care & Desludging Requirements

The effective operation of any septic tank is dependent upon the nature and quantity of the inflow. Other factors such as the use of disinfectants, sanitisers and household cleaners can also adversely affect the septic tank. It is important to correctly maintain and desludge the system as sludge accumulation may damage the system.

Care of the system

- Use water sparingly to prevent overloading the disposal system
- Use toilet paper that disintegrates readily
- **DO NOT** put nappies, nappy liners, tampons etc into the system
- The septic tank will cope with small quantities of toilet cleaners, deodorants, disinfectants and detergents when used in accordance with the directions on the label and container. **AVOID** excessive use of these substances as they can adversely affect the growth of the required bacteria. Whenever possible choose products that are marked as being suitable for use with septic tanks.
- **DO NOT** introduce concentrated disinfectants into the system
- Roof and surface water **MUST** be diverted so that it cannot enter the system

- Do not cover or obstruct inspection openings with concrete paths or similar works and under no circumstances build over the septic tank as it will affect future efforts to carry out maintenance.
- Do not plant trees near your septic tank drains, as their roots will cause blockages and unnecessary expense to you.

Odour control

- A septic tank will discharge a slight odour under normal operation.

Offensive odours from a septic tank may be due to acidic conditions which destroy the bacteria operating within the septic tank. This can be corrected by:

The addition of 5kg of hydrated lime mixed in solution with water and flushed into the septic tank. Depending on the degree of the pH imbalance it may be necessary to apply several dosing spread over 2-3 days.

- In some locations, due to atmospheric conditions or local topography, it may be necessary to extend the head vent above the roofline to disperse the odour at a higher level. Where a vent is extended more than 1.8m in height above the roof it shall be secured with adequate supports.

Mosquito control

Mosquitos can breed abundantly in septic tanks and disposal systems but can be controlled by:

- Proofing vents with non-ferrous mesh and ensuring they are correctly fitted and maintained
- Ensuring inspection openings and covers to the septic tank, pumping sump, sub surface disposal system and sewer drains are mosquito proof

Desludging requirements

- It is very important to have your septic tank desludged. If a septic tank is not regularly desludged, it will decrease the effective life of the disposal system and can cause system failure.
- Sizing of septic tanks for non-residential premises may be designed to allow for a desludging frequency of between 1-4 years. It is essential septic tanks are desludged in accordance with approval conditions.

The size of septic tanks for single residential dwellings are designed that desludging is essential every four years.