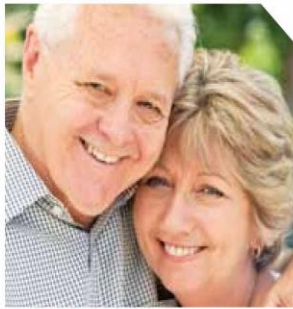




## TOWARDS BETTER ONSITE WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT IN VICTORIA - COMMUNITY EDUCATION SERIES

### **FACT SHEET 8:** LICENSED PLUMBING PRACTITIONERS RESPONSIBILITIES WITH DOMESTIC WASTEWATER

This fact sheet provides an overview of the responsibilities of licensed plumbing practitioners when undertaking work associated with septic and package treatment systems for domestic and commercial properties. This fact sheet may also assist anyone looking to build a house or set up a commercial business in a non-sewered area, or modify or repair an existing domestic wastewater management system.



## 8.1 AS A LICENSED PLUMBING PRACTITIONER WHEN DO YOU NEED TO TALK TO AN ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PRACTITIONER AT YOUR LOCAL COUNCIL?

You need to speak to your local Environmental Health Practitioner (EHP or EHO) when you are undertaking a range of jobs related to domestic wastewater systems. Contact the local council and environmental health practitioner when:

- Installing a new onsite domestic wastewater system;
- Undertaking repairs or altering an existing onsite domestic wastewater system;
- Upgrading an existing onsite domestic wastewater system;
- When an onsite domestic wastewater system is failing; or
- Adding or replacing plumbing fixtures to an onsite domestic wastewater system.

## 8.2 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES:

Your local EHP (EHO) will process your application and you will work with you during the process:

### 8.2.1 PERMIT TO INSTALL:

- To install a new onsite domestic wastewater system you will need to apply to your local council for a Permit to Install. This application needs to include the following:
  - Details of the type of system and effluent disposal method;
  - Specific details of the location of the installation, details of the plumber undertaking the works and the owner's consent for the proposed works;
  - Details of the plumber installing the household plumbing works;
  - Declaration of the capacity of all spas and baths proposed to be installed in the house;
  - Declaration of the brand and type of irrigation pipe to be installed (surface and sub surface irrigation systems only);
  - Submit plans and specifications showing:
    - The location of the house on the property;
    - Exact location of all plumbing fixtures and fittings associated with the onsite domestic wastewater system. These may include overflow relief gully, distribution boxes, trench or irrigation lines, taps, flush valves, vacuum breakers, flush return lines, flushing pits or trenches, header and footer manifolds, pump wells, etc.;
    - Location of all additional buildings, proposed buildings, swimming pool, water tanks, driveways, excavations, stormwater drains, water pipes, easement drains, streams, dams and other water ways, and their measured distance from the onsite domestic wastewater system and disposal area;
    - Fall of the land in the vicinity of the disposal area;
    - The point of north;
    - Position of the package treatment plant or septic tank and the effluent disposal area;
    - A detailed plan of the layout of all plumbing fixtures in the disposal area;
    - Detailed floor plans of the house showing all bedrooms and studies.
- The EHP (EHO) will need to conduct a thorough inspection of the property prior to issuing the Permit to Install/Alter. This is to confirm all the details you have provided in your application.
- Once satisfied, the EHP (EHO) will then issue you with the Permit to Install.

Work on the job must not commence before the Permit to Install has been issued and you have reviewed the conditions in the permit. This is very important and will save you time and money by not needing to redo work and will help to protect public health and the environment.

### 8.2.2 PERMIT TO ALTER:

In order to make minor alterations to an existing onsite domestic wastewater system, your local EHP (EHO) will process your application and will work with you during the process. This application needs to include the following:

- The specific Council's application form to alter a septic tank system;
- A letter from the plumber undertaking the proposed works that states:
  - Details of the type of system and effluent disposal method;
  - Whether the existing septic tank is fitted with a baffle;
  - Whether the existing system is functioning adequately;
  - Any elements of the system that will be altered or require repair.
- A detailed plan will also be required from the plumber undertaking the proposed works that shows:
  - The location of all components of the existing onsite domestic wastewater system;
  - The location of all components of the onsite domestic wastewater system that will be altered;
  - The location of the house on the property;
  - Location of all additional buildings, proposed buildings, swimming pool, water tanks, driveways, excavations, stormwater drains, water pipes, easement drains, streams, dams and other water ways, and their measured distance from the onsite domestic wastewater system and disposal area;
  - A detailed plan of the layout of all plumbing fixtures in the disposal area;

- Detailed floor plans of the house showing all bedrooms and studies.

Work on the job must not commence before the Permit to Alter has been issued and you have reviewed the conditions within the permit. This is very important and will save you time and money by not needing to redo work and will help to protect public health and the environment.

### 8.2.3 PROGRESS INSPECTIONS:

Progress inspections are required by most councils. The main progress inspection needs to be conducted before trenches are back filled, but after the base and pipes have been laid. You must contact the EHP (EHO) for the inspection to be carried out.

### 8.2.4 PERMIT TO USE:

- You will need to get the EHP (EHO) back again to have a look at the work once it is finished;
- Once satisfied that all of the conditions in the Permit to Install/Alter have been met and you have provided :
  - a Plumbing Industry Commission (PIC) Compliance Certificate for plumbing works within the house and all drainage works;
  - a commissioning certificate (package treatment plants only); and
  - a plan of the constructed onsite domestic wastewater system.
- A Permit to Use can be issued. The Permit to Use will be needed for a building surveyor to issue a Certificate of Occupancy, where required (e.g. a new house or extension).

## 8.3 PLUMBING INDUSTRY COMMISSION ACTIVITIES:

The Plumbing Industry Commission (PIC) is responsible for maintaining the effectiveness and efficiency of Victoria's plumbing regulatory system.

### 8.3.1 COMPLIANCE CERTIFICATE:

- PIC licensed plumbing practitioners self-certify their plumbing work by issuing Compliance Certificates;
- The Compliance Certificate certifies that the plumbing work complies with all relevant

regulatory requirements and provides insurance coverage for the work for up to six years.

### 8.3.2 AUDITS AND INSPECTIONS:

- The PIC also conduct audits and inspections of a percentage of work undertaken to ensure that it meets the high standard required to ensure consumer safety. The PIC can also follow up with any legal action and rehabilitation work as required.

## 8.4 GENERAL COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS:

**PLEASE NOTE: This fact sheet is only a guide, and it is your responsibility to ensure that your work complies with the regulations, standards, local and state government policies, and any other relevant statutory requirements.**

- All plumbing work must be carried out in accordance with *Section 12A of the Building Act 1993* and *associated Plumbing Regulations 2008* and *the Environmental Protection Act 1970*;
- The inlet to the septic tank or package treatment plant:
  - shall be 100mm sewer quality uPVC, protected from damage and adequate fall (check with EHP of EHO);
  - have an overflow relief gully (ORG) at least 150mm below the outlet of the lowest fixture;
- Install the septic tank or package treatment plant at least 300 mm lower than the lowest fixture and fill with water. Inspection openings and distribution pit lids need to be airtight, child proof and finished at ground level;
- The drainage pipe downstream of the septic tank or package treatment plant may be 90mm HD uPVC if there is a minimum of 300mm cover, otherwise it must be 100mm pipe. Inspection openings are required at any changes of direction and every 30m;
- Effluent disposal trenches must fit with the contour of the natural land and level along the low edge;
- The following minimum setback distances must be met:
  - The septic tank or package treatment plant needs to be a minimum of 2m from the dwelling;
  - With at least 3m of undisturbed ground between each trench at their closest point;
  - No closer than 6m on the high side or 3m at the low side from a swimming or wading pool, any building, or the boundary of the allotment;
  - In an area not subject to vehicle traffic or livestock;
  - No closer than 3m to any water supply pipe, gas pipe, telecommunications cable, underground powerlines, stormwater drain, or any other pipe system;
  - No closer than 15m from any cutting or escarpment, underground water tank, bore or well less than 20m deep and used for drinking purposes;
  - No closer than 60m to the bank of any surface waters, 100m from a declared water catchment area, or 300m from a drinking water supply reservoir;
  - Some setback distances may be reduced at the discretion of the EHP (EHO) for package treatment plants. You will need to consult your EHP (EHO), should you need to reduce a setback distance.

## 8.5 PENALTIES:

If you do not comply with the conditions within the Permit to Install/Alter, there are significant penalties

that can be imposed under the *Environment Protection Act 1970*.

## 8.6 RELEVANT REGULATION AND GUIDELINES:

There are a number of regulatory documents and guidelines that you will need to refer to when preparing plans and specifications, and undertaking any plumbing work associated with domestic wastewater. These are:

### ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AUTHORITY (EPA VIC) PUBLICATIONS:

- *Environment Protection Act 1970*;
- State Environment Protection Policy (Waters of Victoria) (2003);
- Code of Practice - Wastewater Management Publication No 891 (Current version as published on EPA website);
- Code of Practice for Small Wastewater Treatment Plants Publication No. 500 (1997);
- Certificate of Approval.

You can obtain further information and copies of the EPA Vic documents from the following website:  
<http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/water/wastewater/onsite.asp>

### AUSTRALIAN NEW ZEALAND PUBLICATIONS:

- Australian New Zealand Standards 1547
- Australian New Zealand Standard 1546.1
- Australian New Zealand Standard 1546.2
- Australian New Zealand Standard 1546.3

Australian New Zealand publications can be purchased from Standards Australia.

## 8.7 WHO TO CONTACT:



**Mail** PO Box 18 Ballan Vic 3342  
**Ballan** 15 Stead St Ballan  
**Bacchus Marsh** 215 Main St Bacchus Marsh  
**Darley** 182 Halletts Way Darley

**P** (03) 5366 7100  
**E** [info@moorabool.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@moorabool.vic.gov.au)  
**W** [www.moorabool.vic.gov.au](http://www.moorabool.vic.gov.au)  
**ABN** 293 5275 4296

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\* ALL WASTEWATER IS TO BE RETAINED ON THE PROPERTY