



## FACT SHEET - MANAGEMENT OF YOUR SEPTIC TANK

### Tips for Good Management of Your Septic Tank and Disposal Area

The effective operation of a septic tank and disposal area will, in part, depend on how it is operated and maintained. A small amount of maintenance work performed regularly can prevent your system from failing. The following information provides guidance on how to achieve the most from your system:

#### DO ...

- ✓ Ensure your wastewater system is appropriate for the area. Inappropriate systems can pollute the natural environment and pose health risks to humans.
- ✓ Regularly maintain the disposal area. Long grass and weeds reduces the evapo-transpiration efficiency.
- ✓ Have your septic tank de-sludged every three to five years to prevent sludge build up, which may 'clog' the pipes and absorption trenches.
- ✓ Prevent the entry of stormwater onto the disposal area by constructing a diversion drain upslope. Direct the stormwater around the disposal area.
- ✓ Ensure your tank and vent are well sealed. This prevents the entry of vermin and mosquitoes.
- ✓ Conserve Water. The less water you use the drier the disposal area will be, especially through the cooler months.
- ✓ Check household products for suitability for use with a septic tank. Use biodegradable liquid detergents, such as concentrates with low phosphorous and low sodium.
- ✓ Have your grease trap (if installed) cleaned out regularly.
- ✓ Learn the location and layout of your septic system and disposal area.
- ✓ Keep a record of pumping, inspections, and other maintenance.

#### DON'T ...

- ✗ Permit livestock to graze on the absorption/transpiration area. This can lead to compaction and collapse of the area.
- ✗ Put large quantities of bleaches, disinfectants, whiteners, nappy soakers and spot removers into your septic tank via the sink, washing machine or toilet.
- ✗ Allow any foreign materials such as nappies, sanitary napkins, condoms and other hygiene products to enter the system.
- ✗ Put fats and oils down the drain and keep food waste out of your system.
- ✗ Install or use a garbage grinder or spa bath if your system is not designed for it.
- ✗ Medicines/antibiotics can also kill the essential bacteria in your septic system.

### What to do if there is a Problem With Your Septic Tank or Disposal Area

If there is a problem with your septic tank or disposal area that has potential to impact on the environment or public health, then you must by law do something about it. Indications of a problem include foul smells from the tank or disposal area; toilets and drains that back up or drain slowly; high water level in the septic tank; tanks not de-sludged in the last 5 years or a wet/soggy disposal area. Do not ignore the problem, it will only get worse and could cost you more money in the long term.

**Important Notice:** For operational problems with an existing system you should contact a licensed plumber.

For advice prior to carrying out any alterations/modifications to existing systems, or the installation of a new system, you should contact Council.



60 Station Street  
 PO Box 152  
 Quirindi NSW 2343  
 TEL 02 6746 1755  
 FAX 02 6746 3255  
 EMAIL [lpsc@lpsc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:lpsc@lpsc.nsw.gov.au)  
 WEBSITE [www.lpsc.nsw.gov.au](http://www.lpsc.nsw.gov.au)