



## Warning Signs

There are a number of warning signs you can look out for that signal there are troubles with your AWTS:

- Water drains from the house slowly.
- Drain pipes that gargle or make noises.
- Sewage smells from drains or system.
- Water backing up into your sink.
- Wastewater pooling over land application/irrigation area.
- Black coloured effluent in the aeration tank.
- Excess noise from the blower or pumping equipment.
- Poor vegetation growth in the irrigation area.

## Reducing Water Usage

Reducing water usage in your home will lessen the likelihood of problems such as overloading with your septic system. Overloading may result in wastewater backing up into your house, contamination of your yard with improperly treated effluent or effluent from your system contaminating groundwater, nearby creeks, rivers or dams.

Conservative water use around the home will reduce the amount of wastewater entering the system and prolong the life of your application area.

***Poorly maintained AWTS are a serious source of water pollution and may present health risks, cause odours and attract vermin and insects.***

***By looking after your system you can do your part in protecting the environment and the health of you and your family***

## Approval to Install & Operate

Under the Local Government act 1993 all On-Site Sewage Management Systems require Council approval prior to installation. An application to install an on-site sewage management system must be accompanied by a Waste Water Management Report prepared by a suitably qualified consultant. The consultant will look at the land and soil type and put forward a recommendation determining what type of system is needed based on the individual characteristics of the site and the anticipated loading. The report will also detail the most appropriate location for the system on your property.

The NSW Government introduced the SepticSafe Program in 1998 to help property owners and Councils keep onsite sewage management systems working efficiently and safely. All owners of sewage management systems are now required to apply to Council for an Approval to Operate. This Approval is a means by which the Council can monitor and manage the cumulative impact of sewage pollution in local areas. The Approval also ensures that property owners are aware of their responsibility to efficiently operate and regularly maintain their system.

***For further information or advice please contact Upper Lachlan Council's Department of Environmental Services on 02 4830 1000.***

## On-Site Sewage Management

### Aerated Wastewater Treatment Systems (AWTS)



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# Septic Tank and Trench/Transpiration Bed Systems

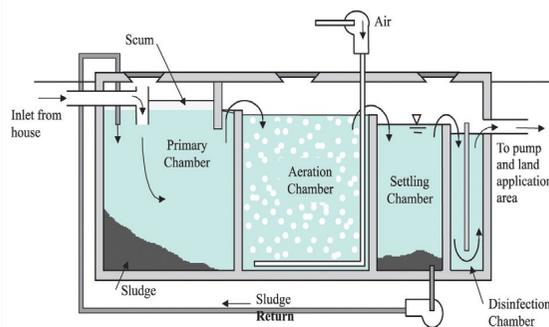
## What is a AWTS and how does it work?

An Aerated Wastewater Treatment System is a purpose built system used for the treatment of wastewater.

AWTS consist of one or two tanks which contain a series of chambers. Wastewater enters the first chamber which acts as a septic tank allowing solids to settle and form the sludge layer while fats and greases form the scum layer on top. The partially clarified wastewater located between these two layers then flows into the second chamber.

In the second chamber the wastewater is aerated and treated further by biological activity. In third chamber additional clarification occurs with the settling of any remaining solids.

The remaining effluent is now moved to the last chamber for disinfection usually by chlorination and then irrigated either by surface spray irrigation or sub-surface drip irrigation.



## Maintaining your Septic System

The effectiveness of your system is dependent on how it is operated and maintained. The following is a guide to good maintenance procedures you should follow:

### Do

- ✓ Have your AWTS serviced quarterly by a qualified service agent.
- ✓ Ensure your service agent checks the sludge and scum levels in all tanks.
- ✓ Ensure the disinfection chamber is inspected and replenished each service.
- ✓ Have your system desludged every 3-5 years.
- ✓ Mow and maintain your irrigation area and ensure that all sprays are operating and moved periodically.
- ✓ Keep a record of inspections, pump outs and other maintenance.
- ✓ Learn the location and layout of your AWTS and irrigation area.
- ✓ Use biodegradable liquid detergents that are low in sodium and phosphorous.
- ✓ Conserve water.

### Don't

- ✗ Put bleaches, disinfectants, whiteners, nappy soakers and spot cleaners in large quantities into your AWTS.
- ✗ Allow any foreign materials such as nappies, sanitary napkins, condoms or other hygiene products to enter the system.
- ✗ Allow excessive amounts of fats and oils to enter the system.
- ✗ Switch off power to the AWTS even if you are going on holidays.
- ✗ Use spray irrigation for the watering of vegetables or other products intended for consumption, or use to water recreational areas where children may play.

**WARNING**  
RECLAIMED EFFLUENT  
IN THIS LOCATION  
DO NOT DRINK  
AVOID CONTACT

*Every AWTS irrigation area must have at least two Warning Signs displayed as shown above.*

## Owner's Responsibilities

As the owner of an AWTS you are responsible for:

- Ensuring the system is inspected quarterly by a qualified service technician.
- Ensuring the system has a current 'Approval to Operate'.
- Ensuring the tank/s don't leak.
- Promptly fixing the system when problems are detected.
- De-sludging the system when solid levels become high.
- Ensuring that effluent warning signs are displayed within the land application/ irrigation area.
- Complying with Councils requests for inspections or maintenance.
- Ensuring that the location of sprinklers (where approved) within your irrigation area comply with the following buffer distances:
  - 100m from any permanent surface waters
  - 250m from any domestic groundwater well
  - 40m from any other waters (e.g. Intermittent Watercourses, dams, drainage depressions)
  - 15m from dwellings