

Septic Tank Guidance - Plumbers Installing an Onsite Wastewater Management System

What is the role of licensed plumbers for the installation and maintenance of onsite wastewater?

- Liaise with the Council's EHO regarding the installation of a new system, or the repair or alteration of an existing system.
- Assist in submitting applications to install, repair or alter any domestic wastewater system.
- Share any information provided by the EHO in relation to requirements, site inspections and any other relevant information associated with the system and the work being undertaken.
- Provide technical advice when selecting an appropriate site and wastewater system design.
- Assist with information about the operation and maintenance of the system to the property/landowner.

What is the role for the Victorian Building Authority?

The Victorian Building Authority (VBA) is important to the work related to the installation, repair or alternation to onsite wastewater systems by:

- Regulating building and plumbing relating to onsite wastewater management systems.
- Administers the Building Act 1993, Building Regulations 2018, Plumbing Regulations 2018, and the National Construction Code (NCC) Volumes 1 to 3.
- Enforces practitioner compliance with the Building Act 1993 and its subordinate regulations.

Permit information

An application for a Permit to Install or Permit to Alter needs to include:

- Details of the type of on-site wastewater management system, a matching appropriate disposal method and the location details.
- Specific details of the licensed plumbing practitioner/s undertaking the household plumbing and on-site wastewater management system works.
- The owner's written consent to undertake these works.
- Accurate plans and specifications, including site plan, floor plan, wastewater management system specifications and proposed construction details.

The EHO will conduct an inspection of the property prior to issuing the permit. This is to confirm all the details in the application are correct. Once these details are confirmed the permit can be issued. No works can commence on the on-site wastewater management system without the permit being issued. The licensed plumbing practitioner should review the permit, read all the conditions and ensure the wastewater system is installed in accordance with the specific permit conditions.

Installation

An onsite wastewater management system must be installed by a qualified plumbing practitioner. The following advice should be followed for installation:

- Under the plumbing regulatory framework, the pipework connecting the treatment unit and land application area, the pipes in irrigation fields and the pipes supplying advanced secondary treated greywater to fixtures within the house must be colour-coded purple.
- System components should be installed to prevent public access where possible.
- Appropriate signage with the symbols or words indicating 'Recycled Water — Do Not Drink' needs to be clearly displayed. This should be displayed on the treatment unit near any dedicated greywater hose tap and any land application area.

All work is to be carried out in accordance with:

- EPA Guideline for onsite wastewater management
- EPA Guideline for onsite wastewater effluent dispersal and recycling systems
- Plumbing Code of Australia
- AS/NZS 1546.1:2008, On-site domestic wastewater treatment units, Part 1: Septic tanks (AS/NZS 1546.1:2008)
- AS/NZS 1546.2:2008, On-site domestic wastewater treatment units, Part 2: Waterless composting toilets (AS/NZS 1546.2:2008)
- AS 1546.3:2017, On-site domestic wastewater treatment units, Part 3: Secondary treatment systems (AS 1546.3:2017)
- AS 1546.4:2016, On-site domestic wastewater treatment units, Part 4: Domestic greywater treatment systems (AS 1546.4:2016)
- AS/NZS 1547:2012, On-site domestic wastewater management (AS/NZS 1547:2012)
- AS/NZS 3500.1:2021 Set (Parts 0-4) 2021: Plumbing and drainage (AS/NZS 3500.1:2021)
- AS/NZS 4130:2018 Polyethylene (PE) pipes for pressure applications (AS/NZS 4130:2018).

Additional information on the installation on onsite wastewater management systems are on the EPA website: <https://www.epa.vic.gov.au/about-epa/publications/onsite-wastewater-management-guidance>.

Documentation

On completion of the installation, testing and commissioning of the OWMS, the licensed plumbing practitioner must issue a plumbing compliance certificate. The plumbing compliance certificate must also be lodged with the Victorian Building Authority for plumbing work that includes the plumbing:

- from the house to the treatment plant
- from the treatment plant to the land application system and the installation of the land application system
- for any indoor recycling using purple pipes and backflow prevention devices.

The plumber is also recommended to provide the following documents to Council or the landowner and/or occupier:

- A commissioning report in accordance with AS/NZS 1547:2012.
- A 'work-as-built' plan and report of the plumbing, treatment and dispersal systems in relation to the house, driveway and allotment boundaries.

- Statement of service life and warranty of parts.
- Manufacturer or distributor's warranty that the system installed for a commercial or community premises is appropriate for the intended use.
- Owner's manual.
- Maintenance/service manual including a service report template
- A copy of the plumbing compliance certificate.

Certificate of Use

The EHO needs to come back to inspect all the works once it is finished. Once the EHO is satisfied that all of the conditions in the permit have been met and the plumbing compliance certificate has been provided to Council, a Certificate of Use will be issued. The system is now able to be used.