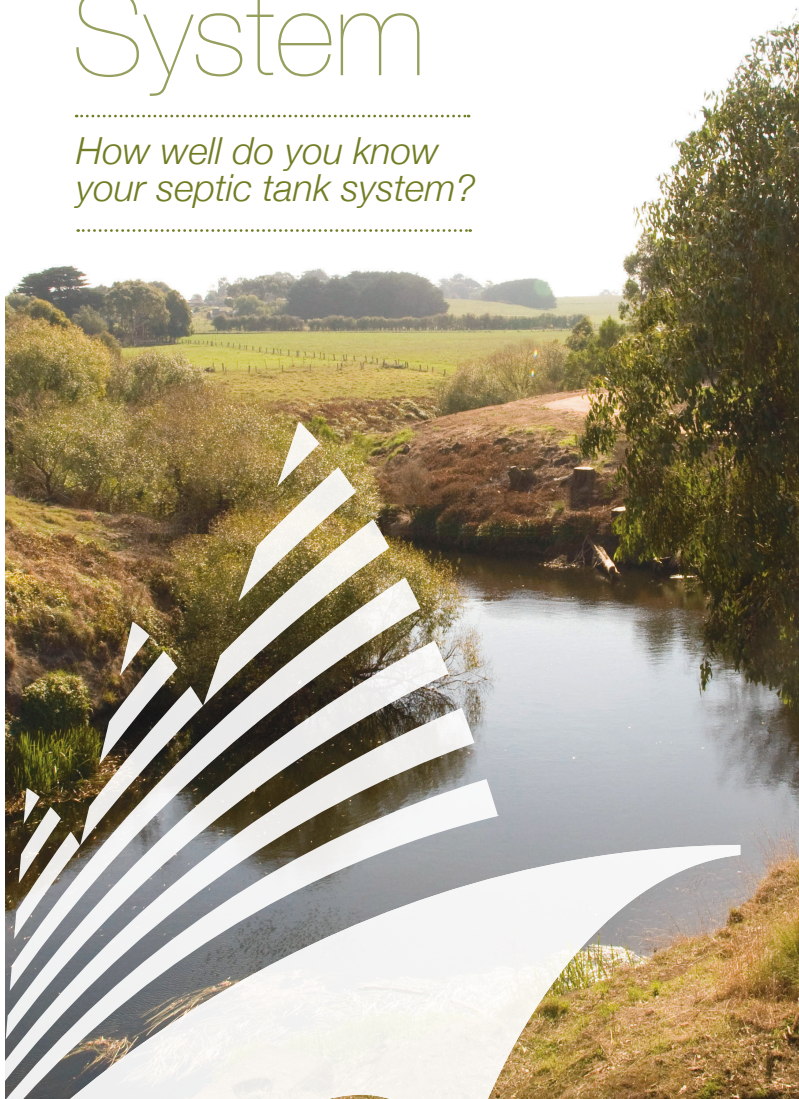




(LEANER, GREENER, SMARTER)

Your Septic Tank System

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*How well do you know
your septic tank system?*
.....



Your septic tank system

If your dwelling is not connected to the reticulated sewerage system, you will most likely have a septic tank system in your backyard to treat your sewage (wastewater) and dispose of it over your property.

Wastewater from the toilet, bathroom, kitchen and laundry is all treated by your septic tank system. When the septic tank system is working correctly it treats the wastewater to minimise risks to the environment, and to your family's health.

Failing septic tank systems can cost you \$\$\$\$!

Poor management of your septic tank system can cost you money – not to mention inconvenience and wasted time:

Not getting your septic tank system desludged every three years:

✗ Pay \$3,000 for new trenches.

Toilet blocks and then overflows:

✗ Pay \$500 for carpet cleaning & a plumber.

Your family pet becomes ill from drinking effluent run-off:

✗ Pay \$400 in Vet's fees.

Your pump burns out because of lack of maintenance:

✗ Pay \$300 for repairs.

You reverse your car over the system:

✗ Pay \$12,000 for a new system.

Neighbours complain of odour and effluent runoff because the system is not working:

✗ Pay \$1,200 in fines.



Non-working septic tank systems are dangerous

Septic tank systems that are failing can release sewage into your backyard, or even worse, into your neighbours. Poorly managed septic tank systems that release untreated effluent are a potential disease risk, particularly to children, pets and farm animals. Environmental impacts of untreated effluent run-off can include polluted land, mosquito breeding, algae growth, and pollution of our waterways, (eg. Russells Creek, Hopkins River and the Merri River).

How to spot a problem with your septic tank system

- Water drains too slowly from your toilet, sink, shower or bath.
- Drainpipes gurgle because air bubbles are forced back through the system.
- You can smell sewage.
- The backyard becomes waterlogged, and effluent pools in your yard.
- You can see collapsed or sunken absorption trenches, broken pipes or green patches on your lawn.

Managing your septic tank system

- Don't dispose of oils, grease, food scraps, paints, medicines, tampons or condoms in your system.
- Use biodegradable or small amounts of low phosphorus cleaning products. Disinfectants and bleaches kill off the good bacteria in your system that breaks down waste.
- Get your system desludged every three years as per Council's Local Law requirements.
- Ensure your secondary treatment system's maintenance requirements are met.
- Plant suitable plants around your effluent disposal areas. A list of these plants can be obtained from the Council or contact your local nursery for advice.
- Do not drive a vehicle over any part of the septic tank system, especially the trenches.
- Try not to use too much water. Remember that all water used has to go somewhere on your property.
- Ensure that only registered Plumbers undertake alterations or repairs to your system in accordance with Council's permit conditions.
- Get to know your system. Refer to the owner's manual, talk to your plumber or contact the Council to obtain a plan.

For further information, or to obtain copies of plans or conditions of use, please contact Council's Health Unit.



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