

POLICY REGISTER

ON-SITE SEWAGE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS (Septics) POLICY

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POLICY - Onsite Management Systems

POLICY

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Name

This policy will be known as Warren Shire Council Onsite Sewage Management Policy.

1.2 Commencement

This policy will commence operation on 7th June 2010.

1.3 Aims and objectives

The aim of this Policy is to ensure that On-Site Sewage Management Systems meet acceptable environmental and health performance standards. Specific objectives include:

- Prevention of public health risk;
- Protection of surface water;
- Protection of groundwater;
- Protection of land;
- Conservation and reuse of resources;
- Protection of community amenity.

1.4 Policy purpose

The purpose of the policy is to:

- guide landholders towards sustainable on-site management of domestic sewage and wastewater.
- protect and enhance the quality of public health and the environment in the long term within the Warren Shire Council Local Government Area.
- assist Council to prioritise resources for the efficient regulation and monitoring of on-site sewage management systems within its Local Government area.

1.5 Definitions

For the purposes of this policy the following definitions apply:

Human waste storage facility - means a device for holding or disposing of human waste, including a cesspit, septic tank, septic closet, water closet, chemical closet, humus closet and combustion closet.

Non-perennial watercourse or water body - means a non-perennial watercourse as identified on the key to a 1:100 000 topographical map produced by Land and Property Information NSW.

Perennial watercourse or water body - means a perennial watercourse as identified on the key to a 1:100 000 topographical map produced by Land and Property Information NSW.

Operate a system of sewage management - means to hold or process, or re-use or otherwise dispose of, sewage or by-products of sewage, whether or not the sewage is generated on the premises on which the system of sewage management is operated. This includes the following:

- (a) use artificial wetlands, transpiration mounds, trenches, vegetation and the like in related effluent application areas;
- (b) to hold or process sewage that is to be subsequently discharged to into a public sewer.

Regulation - is the Local Government (Approvals) Regulation 2005.

Related effluent application area - in relation to a sewage management facility, means the area of land, if any:

- (a) where it is intended to dispose of the effluent and any byproducts of sewage from the facility; or
- (b) to which the effluent and by-products are intended to be applied.

Sewage - includes effluent, being any matter or thing, whether solid or liquid or a combination of solids and liquids, which is of a kind that may be removed from a human waste storage facility, sullage pit or grease trap, or from any holding tank or other container forming part of, or used in connection with a human waste storage facility, sullage pit or grease trap.

Sewage management facility - means:

- (a) a human waste storage facility; or
- (b) a waste treatment device intended to process sewage, and includes a drain connected to such a facility or device.

1.6 Outcomes

As a result of achievement of the aims and objectives of this policy, the following outcomes will be achieved;

- The impacts of on-site sewage management facilities on the environment will be minimised through appropriate selection, design, siting, construction, operation and maintenance.
- Identification of the location of all on-site sewage management facilities and a creation of a database of these systems that will be maintained.
- A partnership will be developed between Council, householders and service agents supporting continuing improvement of on-site sewage management.
- The owners of on-site sewage management facilities will be aware of the need for ongoing maintenance.
- The owners of on-site sewage management facilities will understand the need to obtain approvals.
- Council will recover some of the costs of implementing this policy by charging fees.
- Qualifications and accreditation processes for third parties to certify maintenance work and/or compliance with approval standards for all types of systems will be specified.

- Through consultation, local service agents will be aware of qualification and accreditation procedures.
- On-site waste management systems will be inspected upon a frequency as defined within this policy.

1.7 Relevant legislation

Legislation relevant to this policy that Council will consider includes:

- Local Government Act 1993.
- Local Government (General) Regulation 2005.
- The Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.
- Public Health Act 1991.
- Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997.
- Accreditation of all human waste treatment devices by NSW Health.
- Environment and Health Protection Guidelines (On-site Sewage Management for Single Households) by Department of Local Government, Environment Protection Authority, NSW Health, Land and Water Conservation and the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning.

1.8 Australian standards

Australian Standards relevant to this policy and that Council will consider includes:

- AS/NZS 1547 - On-site Domestic-wastewater Management.
- AS3500 - Plumbing and Drainage Code as amended.
- AS 1546 - On-site Domestic Wastewater Treatment Units (part 1 applies to septic tanks)
- AS4419 - Soils for Landscaping and Garden Use
- AS2698: - Plastic Pipes and Fittings for Rural Applications

Part I Polyethylene, micro irrigation pipes

Part II Polyethylene, rural pipes

Part III Mechanical joint fittings for use with polyethylene micro irrigation pipes

- AS3000 - Wiring Rules - Electrical Installation - Buildings, Structures and Premises
- AS1319 - Safety Signs for the Occupational Environment

1.9 Application

This policy applies to all domestic development on lands within Warren Shire local government area without Town/Village disposal system.

Critical areas for consideration include all villages and areas where small area subdivisions have or are likely to occur. Within these areas there are a number of dwellings located in close proximity and commonly adjacent to waterways.

1.10 Exemptions

The Minister of Local Government has not granted consent for the inclusion of any exemptions within this policy. As a result, Council is unable to grant any exemptions from the provisions of this policy. Future exemptions may be available through a Local Approvals Policy (LAP) with the prior consent of the Director General, Department of Local Government under section 162 of the Local Government Act 1993. The LAP must specify circumstances in which a person is exempt from the requirement to obtain council approval to operate a system of sewage management.

2 IMPLEMENTATION

2.1 Process outline

Implementation of Policy will include:

- Lodgement of an application for approval.
- Review of the applications received.
- Identification of high, medium and low risk installations.
- Initially, inspection of installations will be conducted in high risk areas. Medium and low risk areas will be inspected during the approval process.
- Upgrading of installations where necessary.
- Levying of fees in accordance with this policy. Fees will be identified annually in Council's Management Plan.

2.2 Existing systems

On-site systems owners that previously notified Council of the presence of their system have been registered to operate the system. Approval to operate the system will be dependant upon the system continuing to operate in a manner that does not produce environmental or health risk to the site occupants or the wider environment.

Where appropriate Council may require an application for renewal to be submitted. Applications for renewal of an approval to continue to operate an on-site sewage management system are to be accompanied by a certificate of inspection issued by Council or a service technician / certifier accredited under this policy. To ensure a consistency of approach all inspections will utilise the appropriate inspection checklist that is available from Council.

2.3 New systems

All new systems or altered systems are required to be certified as compliant with the necessary standards by the issue of a Compliance Certificate.

At completion of installation or alteration of a system, a Compliance Certificate is to be issued prior to commencement of use.

2.4 Applications for approval

An application for approval to install, construct or operate a sewage management facility will be accompanied by;

- A Plan drawn to scale, and showing location of:
 - (i) the sewage management facility proposed to be installed or existing on the premises, and
 - (ii) any related effluent application areas, and

- (iii) any existing or proposed buildings or facilities on the site including any environmentally sensitive areas located within 100 metres of the sewage management facility or effluent application areas.
- Specifications of the sewage management facility proposed to be installed or constructed on the premises concerned. Specifications to include details of pump sizes, air pump capacities, tank capacities and cross sectional details.
- A geotechnical site assessment detailing the topography, soil composition and vegetation of any effluent application areas related to a proposed sewage management facility. The report is to provide information indicating that the proposed system is capable of providing long term effluent disposal.

The report is to be prepared by a suitably qualified geotechnical specialist or other person approved by council and be certified as complying with the requirements of the Environmental 85 Health Protection Guidelines (On-site Sewage Management for Single Households) and Australian / New Zealand Standard 1547 - On- site Domestic-wastewater Management.

- A statement by the owner or applicant indicating:
 - (i) the number of or probable number of persons residing in the premises,
 - (ii) the number of rooms capable of being used as a bedroom, and
 - (iii) other factors as may be relevant to the capacity of the proposed sewage management facility or site conditions that may influence the operation of the facility.

Operation and maintenance details are required to identify:

- (i) the operation and maintenance requirements for the sewage management facility,
- (ii) the proposed operation, maintenance and servicing arrangements intended to meet those requirements, and
- (iii) the action to be taken in the event of a breakdown in, or other interference with system operation.

A submission for approval is required to consist of no less than three (3) copies of the information.

2.5 Site Risk Assessment

Council will categorise installations Warren Shire according to the degree of risk of each installation to the environment or health. The categories will rank sites into low, medium and high risk in terms of their likely impact.

Factors that determine risk category are:

Site area / location

Number of occupants

Distance from disposal area to nearest body of water

Distance from nearest bore or well used for domestic water supply

Distance from disposal area to property boundaries

Soil erosion

Landfall / slope

Arrangements for stormwater diversion

Proximity to human activity

Flood inundation potential
Surface water
Water Table
Swimming Pools

2.6 Risk Category

Following receipt of an application for approval to install or operate an on-site sewage management system, an evaluation will be undertaken to identify the risk category of the system. The evaluation will be made in accordance with the site risk assessment as set out in section 2.5 of this policy and the information provided in the application.

Council will determine the risk category in accordance with the following:

Where at least **one** "high" risk factor exists, the system will be classified as having a risk assessment of "high".

Where no "high" risk factors exist, but at least **one** "medium" risk factor exists, the system will be classified as having a risk assessment of "medium".

Where all individual risk factors are "low", the system will be classified as having a risk assessment of "low".

Assessment criteria factors will be considered individually based on the objective criteria within this policy. Council may choose to include additional criteria to reflect specific issues relevant to a particular site.

The risk category will be utilised to determine the frequency of inspection and licencing periods. Below is an indication of inspection frequency:

Low-risk - to be inspected every ten (10) years.

Medium-risk - to be inspected every five (5) years.

High-risk - to be inspected every twelve months.

Aerated Wastewater Treatment Systems (AWTS): inspection to occur according to the assessed risk determined by Council at the time of the assessment.

NOTE: The AWTS must also be inspected and serviced according to the manufacturer's instructions by a service technician approved by the manufacturer and Council, at cost to the owner and the resultant certificate provided to Council for registration.

2.7 System performance

An installation that is failing to operate in accordance with the aims and objectives of this plan may be re-categorised as a high risk installation.

Council may issue an order under the provisions of clause 47 (1) of the Local Government Act 1993 to require a system to be altered to restore performance to the acceptable standard.

2.8 Risk category review

When an installation has been categorised by Council, and the owner believes that the category is inappropriate, an application for review may be submitted. The application is required to include sufficient information to allow a review of the classification and be accompanied by the appropriate fee.

2.9 Risk re-categorisation

To encourage appropriate management and maintenance of on-site sewage management systems, Council may reclassify the risk category. Council will notify property owners where it is considered that a re-categorisation is proposed.

Re-categorisation of installations may be as follows:

High to medium risk - where over a period of three years of continuous licensed operation, a particular installation has been shown, to be operating in accordance with this plan,

Medium to low risk - where over a period of five years of continuous licensed operation, a particular installation has been shown to be operating in accordance this plan,

Properties that change ownership will have the system returned to its original categorisation. Council will notify new property owners of the re-categorisation and the requirement to obtain an approval to operate the system.

2.10 System inspections

Where system re-registration is required, the system will be inspected by Council or by a person who is registered with Warren Shire Council as an accredited person.

The licenced owner or operator of a system may be authorised to certify that the system is operating in accordance with this policy if granted an approval by Council.

Council may inspect any system at any time to ensure maintenance of the standards.

An accredited certifier or service person is required to certify that an aerated waste treatment system is operating in accordance with the standards.

Council proposes to monitor the application of this policy by conducting inspections of approximately 5% of all installations annually.

2.11 Fees

Council may impose fees for applications for approval to install or operate a system of sewage management, the implementation of inspections of any premises, facilities or maintenance of records. The approved fee will be listed in Council's Management Plan.

3 ADMINISTRATION

3.1 Records

Council will register all applications and details of the determination in a register. It will include details of, applicant, property descriptions, type of installation, date of application, any site inspections, determination of the application, and date of issue of any approval or refusal and any other relevant details.

The register may be kept in electronic format.

3.2 Approval renewal

A renewal of an approval may be required where the system is:

- a) due to have its approval to operate renewed
- b) due to be serviced according to its operational guidelines
- c) in need of repair
- d) requiring replacement
- e) to be installed
- f) to be altered, modified or attended to in terms of operational adjustment
- g) to be certified by persons other than the Council.

3.3 Renewal notification

Notification will be sent at least two months prior to the expiry date of the current approval. The notification will include an application form for renewal and details of the information required to be submitted with the application.

3.4 Accredited certifiers AWT systems.

The minimum requirements necessary before a person may be considered for accreditation by Warren Shire Council to service and maintain an AWT system is:

- have completed an appropriate course of instruction with an accredited college or similar body in the maintenance and operation of AWT systems;
- have demonstrated knowledge in the area of:
 - i) system design and treatment processes
 - ii) operation and maintenance requirements
 - iii) performance standards for environment and health protection
 - iv) regulatory requirements and obligations
 - v) consumer's rights
 - vi) occupational health and safety requirements
 - vii) environment protection responsibilities

3.5 Accredited service technicians non AWT systems.

The minimum requirements necessary before a person may be considered for accreditation by Warren Shire Council to service and maintain septic tanks, irrigation fields, absorption fields and trenching and the like are;

Tradesman qualification as a plumber and drainer have demonstrated knowledge in the area of:

- i) system design and treatment processes
- ii) operation and maintenance requirements
- iii) performance standards for environment and health protection
- iv) regulatory requirements and obligations
- v) consumer's rights
- vi) occupational health and safety requirements
- vii) environment protection responsibilities

3.6 Licenced owner/operator certification

The minimum requirements necessary for a person who is a licenced owner/operator of a system to be able to self certify a system is;

- completion of an approved management or maintenance course, or
- registration with Council as competent to manage/maintain a system.

3.7 Policy review

This policy will be reviewed every four years within the twelve month period after each general Council election or more often as necessary.

4 INFORMATION SOURCES

- Environment and Health Protection Guidelines. On-site Sewage Management for Single Households. Issued by Department of Local Government, Environment Protection Authority, NSW Health, NSW Department of Land and Water Conservation and the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning.
- On-site Sewage Management Strategy prepared by Bourke Shire Council.
- On-site Sewage Management Strategy prepared by Narromine Shire Council