

Fact Sheet

SEPTIC TANK DECOMMISSIONING

When existing premises are connected to the sewer or a new treatment system is installed, all redundant septic tanks need to be decommissioned. This is to ensure the redundant tanks do not cause any problems regarding public health or the environment in the future.

Why is decommissioning of septic tank important?

Septic tanks are the breeding ground for toxic gases harmful to our health and environment. Old septic systems can become weak with time because of corrosion and can eventually collapse causing injury and even death. To prevent any unfortunate accidents, it is critical to get your septic system decommissioned immediately. If you have an abandoned septic system, contact your local wastewater contractors.

Decommissioning procedure

- All effluent and sludge should be removed from the redundant septic tanks by an approved liquid waste contractor (such as a septic tank pump-out/cleaning contractor) Note: retain the pump-out receipt for verification by council.
- After pump-out/cleanout, tanks are to be treated with hydrated lime to neutralise any remaining contaminants. Care should be taken when using lime. It is important appropriate precautionary steps are taken, such as use of personal protective equipment (skin protection, eye protection and respiratory protection). A copy of the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for lime should be on hand. Only properly qualified persons should be employed to perform any procedures using chemicals.
- After treatment with lime, one or more holes, adequate for drainage, are to be made in the bottom of the tanks.
- The concrete lids and portion of the tank walls are to be buried to below ground level.
- The tanks are to be filled with solid fill; with the ground surface levelled. If settling of the fill material occurs over time it may be necessary to level the ground surface with further fill.