

Wastewater Management

Protecting Health, Environment, and Community

Improperly maintained septic systems – also known as Onsite Wastewater Management Systems (OWMS) can seriously impact your health and the environment. When these systems fail or are poorly maintained, they can release improperly treated wastewater, contaminating local waterways and groundwater.

Health & Environmental Risks

On the Mornington Peninsula, many properties in unsewered townships rely on OWMS. Improperly maintained systems can pose public health risks, contribute to groundwater pollution, as well as harm sensitive environments such as creeks, estuaries and coastal ecosystems.

To protect your health and the Peninsula's environment, maintain your system in good condition and ensure it is regularly serviced. In high-risk areas, connection to the sewer network where available is strongly encouraged and is the safer long-term option.

Under Victoria's *Environment Protection Act 2017*, all property owners and occupiers have a **General Environmental Duty (GED)** to minimise risks to human health and the environment "so far as reasonably practicable."

What are my responsibilities?

- Having your OWMS inspected every three years and desludged as required by a qualified contractor, as set out in the *Community Amenities Local Law 2022*.
- Keeping records of OWMS maintenance and sharing them with Council if asked.
- If operating with a secondary wastewater treatment system, getting a servicing contract in place and having your system serviced every 3 months.

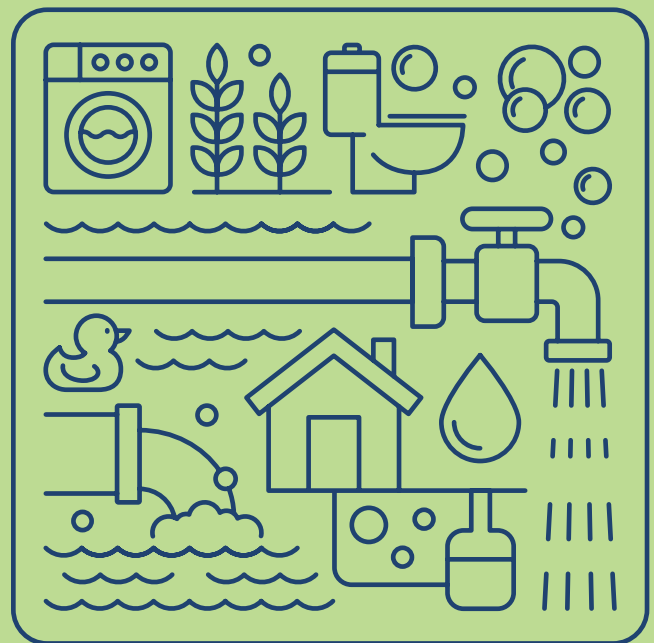
How do I apply to install an onsite wastewater management system?

A 'Permit to Install' must be obtained from the Shire before commencing construction or altering an existing system. The Shire inspects the system during installation to ensure it has been installed correctly and will then issue a 'Certificate to Use'.

Local Education Program

As part of our commitment under the Onsite Wastewater Management Plan, we conduct **free onsite system assessments**, which include:

- Assisting in identifying the type of system and appropriate maintenance needs.
- Locating the system.



Contact the Environmental Health Team

We thank you for helping us all to maintain systems together to protect the distinctive and beautiful character of the Peninsula.



To learn more, scan the QR code, visit our website or contact us:
mornpen.vic.gov.au/wastewater
wastewater@mornpen.vic.gov.au
5950 1373

How Does an OWMS Work?

When you flush the toilet, have a shower or wash dishes where does the water go?

It goes through pipes into a treatment tank to improve the water quality through biological and chemical processes. The wastewater is then disposed of on each property into a subsurface effluent disposal area. The wastewater is further treated through reactions in the soil, then absorbed by plants and released into the atmosphere.



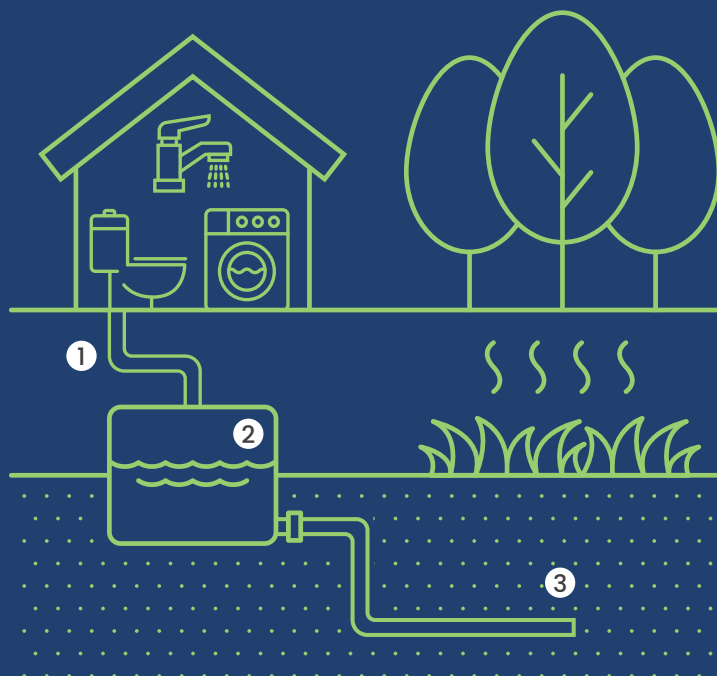
The water exiting the treatment tank is **not the same quality** as tap water and it should not be reused.

Warning Signs of Failing OWMS

Your OWMS may need attention if:

- A rotten egg smell is present.
- The ground is damp/soggy around the effluent disposal area.
- The toilet, shower or drains are slow to clear.

You have a responsibility to respond to problems with your wastewater system and inform the Shire.



Simplified OWMS Cross Section

- ① Wastewater
- ② Treatment tank
- ③ Subsurface effluent disposal area

Helpful Maintenance Hints



Do

- Have your system regularly maintained by professionals. An annual check is recommended.
- Get a service agreement in place to prompt you.
- Switch to natural or bio-degradable cleaners. Chemicals (e.g. disinfectants, bleaches, pesticides) can kill helpful bacteria in your septic system. Try bicarb soda or white vinegar.
- Be mindful of what enters your system. Avoid flushing food, hair, fats/oils, tissues, cat litter, and nappy sanitisers. They can cause blockages.



Don't

- Turn off treatment systems when away. This can damage pumps, control panels and alarms, leading to costly repairs.
- Install kitchen garbage disposals. They disrupt bacteria that breaks down effluent.
- Drive or park on any part of the system. Heavy loads can crush pipes and compact soil, leading to failure and costly repairs.

Want more information?

1300 850 600 (24 hours) or 5950 1373
mornpen.vic.gov.au

NRS: Connect on accesshub.gov.au, ask for 1300 850 600
TTY: 133 677 then ask for 1300 850 600
TIS: 131 450

Sewer Connection Enquiries

Call South East Water Pressure Sewer Connections
1300 733 098