

Wastewater Applications Information for Builders



When applying for a building permit outside of the sewerage area you are required to provide details of any proposed wastewater installations or alterations.

Questions you may ask may include:

- **Why does the wastewater application affect my building permit?**

Under the *Building Regulations 2018* a report and consent under regulation 132 (or a permit to install a wastewater (septic) system) is required wherever an on-site wastewater management system is required to be installed, altered or built over.

This ensures that there is a definite plan for the wastewater management system, that adequate, usable space is left on the block and the landscaping is designed to include the treatment and reuse or disposal of the wastewater.

Driveways, swimming pools, dams, water tanks, underground services, creeks and land subject to inundation or water flows all impact on the space that could be used to dispose of wastewater. For many owners wastewater disposal is not given much thought and will only become an issue if it fails.

To prevent a situation where the wastewater disposal area left is inadequate for the wastewater generated by the household or becomes cost prohibitive to install in an effective manner, the Building Regulations require that it be planned at the same time as the rest of the building and landscaping design.

- **Why does the wastewater application affect my occupancy certificate?**

Under the *Building Regulations 2018* a report and consent under regulation 187 (or an approval to use a wastewater (septic) system) is required wherever there is an installation or alteration of a wastewater (septic) system or the system has been built over.

This is to ensure that the proper inspections and approval of the wastewater (septic) system have been completed and the owner is not left with a finished building but an inadequate wastewater treatment system.

The owner also commits an offence under Regulation 34 *Environment Protection Regulations 2021* if they use the wastewater system without a written approval of use.

A final inspection of building works requires certificates of compliance from plumbers for all their works and, where there is onsite wastewater disposal, an approval to use the wastewater (septic) system.



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- **What should I do to ensure that the wastewater application doesn't hold up my building permits?**

There are a number of things that builders can do to ensure that the process goes smoothly:

1. The builder can submit the application to install a wastewater system as the agent for the owner. This means the builder then takes responsibility to ensure all required inspections are requested and all paperwork required is submitted in a timely manner. The *Environment Protection Regulations 2021* states that Council has 42 business days after receiving the application with all required attachments, fees and further information to decide whether to issue or reject the application. (See Information for Applicants for further information).
2. The builder can apply for a report and consent instead of the application to install. This will involve an extra fee and an application to install a wastewater system will still be required before the final inspection. It is an approval of the general location rather than the exact design of the wastewater system and can be used when the final decisions have not been made and work needs to commence before the design can be finalised. You will still need to submit a land capability assessment if one is required for the property.
3. The builder can leave the owner or the plumber appointed for the work to submit the application to install the wastewater system. This puts the responsibility of the work and the requests for inspections onto the applicant. Remember that, should the applicant fail to submit the application with all required documents in a timely manner, this will impact on the issuing of the building permits. Problems with inadequate plans or land capability assessments can lead to lengthy delays. You may like to keep an eye on this process to ensure that your timelines are not affected.
4. Land capability assessments are soil reports carried out by soil engineers to assess the land's capacity to take up the moisture and organic load of the wastewater to be dispersed to the ground. They are required on properties less than 1 ha in size, land within the Wimmera River catchment area (south end of Northern Grampians Shire area up to and including Glenorchy and Navarre), and wherever the planning permit or the Environmental Health Officer has specifically required one. It will save time (and hopefully money) to have both the soil tests for building and wastewater carried out together.
5. Ensure that inspections of the wastewater system are requested during installation.

- **What inspections are required of the wastewater system?**

Inspection Requirements

- a) At least 48 hours notice is to be given for inspections of works being carried out.
- b) When tanks installed and trenches dug and material installed prior to backfilling.
- c) When all works are completed.

