

## DID YOU KNOW – YOUR SEPTIC SYSTEM

As the majority of Norfolk Island isn't connected to a sewer system, the treatment and utilisation of household wastewater onsite is critical in ensuring minimal impact to public health and the environment. Septic systems have been developed as a way of achieving this, which means all wastewater from a household enters a tank. Most solids settle to the bottom and are retained forming a sludge layer, whilst fats and grease collect at the top in a scum layer.

### **Maintaining your septic system**

The effectiveness of the system will depend on how it is used and maintained. The following is a guide on how to achieve the most from your system.

- Have your system desludged every 1-2 years to prevent sludge build up which may clog your pipes and absorption trench
- Have your grease trap (if installed) cleaned out regularly
- Check household products for suitability for use with a septic tank
- Use biodegradable liquid detergents, such as concentrates with low phosphorous
- Ensure your tank is mosquito-proof
- Retrench your absorption trenches every 10 years and avoid driving vehicles across them

### **Things to avoid in your septic tank**

- Don't put large quantities of cleaning products such as bleaches, disinfectants and whiteners into your system
- Don't allow foreign materials such as nappies, sanitary items and hygiene products to enter the system
- Don't put fats and oils down the drain and remove food waste from the system

Poorly maintained septic systems are a serious source of water pollution and may present health risks. By looking after your system you can do your part in helping to protect the environment and the health of you and your family.

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**Health and Water Officer**

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