



On-site sewerage facilities and greywater



A large number of properties across the Fraser Coast are not connected to a reticulated sewerage system. The treatment and disposal of all wastewater generated on these properties must be undertaken by an on-site sewerage facility.

What is an on-site sewerage facility (OSSF)?

An OSSF is any system that stores, treats and disposes of household wastewater on the property in the designated land application area.

Poorly sited or maintained on-site sewerage facilities can have an impact on public health and the environment.

The owner of the facility is responsible for ensuring the system is maintained and functioning properly.

Are there different types of on-site sewerage facilities?

Yes, there are a number of different types of systems available including:

- aerated wastewater sewage treatment plants (secondary treatment or better);
- aerated/aerobic sand filter system ;
- septic tanks (primary treatment);
- dry vault system (toilet waste only – waterless); and
- greywater treatment/diversion facility.

What happens to the treated wastewater?

The treated wastewater must be pumped to a designated land application area using one of the following methods:

- irrigation system
 - surface irrigation (spray above ground)
 - sub-surface irrigation (drippers in shallow trench)
 - covered surface irrigation (drippers on natural ground covered by mulch, woodchip, etc).
- evapotranspiration-absorption trench/bed/mound
 - trench or bed (embodies the principles of evaporation, transpiration and absorption)
 - elevated sand mound (specially constructed above natural ground level).

The type of land application area will depend on the level of treatment the wastewater has received prior to disposal.

Do I need to maintain the facility?

It is very important to understand that maintenance of a treatment plant or sand filter is mandatory under the *Plumbing and Drainage Act 2018* and is essential for the satisfactory performance of the facility.

The type of maintenance varies depending on whether the system is a treatment plant, sand filter or septic system.

Maintenance for aerated wastewater treatment plants and sand filter systems

The property owner is responsible to ensure the treatment plant or sand filter is serviced at the required intervals (refer below) by a licensed service agent in accordance with the manufacturer's requirements and Council's plumbing permit conditions.

Servicing requirements will depend on the type of system installed but are generally:

- a) Aerated Wastewater Treatment Plant – **every 3 months**; or
- b) Sand Filtration System – **every 12 months**.

Please contact the current service agent for the property for further information concerning the service history of the treatment plant.

A report is prepared by the service agent after each service. A copy should be retained by the property owner and another must be forwarded to Council by the agent.

The service agent must be engaged to carry out any repair work to the installation as well as the routine cleaning and maintenance activities. Any faults revealed in a service inspection must be repaired promptly.

Please note that should Council become aware of a treatment plant or sand filter system not being maintained as required, enforcement action may be undertaken and penalties applied.

Maintenance for Septic systems

Important maintenance includes:

- desludging the septic tank unit every five (5) years by a professional pumping contractor;
- the land application area must have the grass mowed and plants maintained;
- regularly clean out grease trap, and;
- protect the land application area from vehicles.

For more information, please see Council's fact sheet 'Hints for Septic Systems'.

Why does Council require a copy of the servicing report?

Council is required to maintain a register of OSSFs and requires service agents to submit maintenance reports regularly.

If Council does not receive a service report when your service is due, a letter may be sent requesting a copy.

Can I divert greywater?

Greywater from the bath, shower, hand basin and laundry can be diverted for reuse on lawns and gardens.

Kitchen greywater is not suitable for reuse as grease and oil can clog irrigation systems and build up on soil surfaces.

Residents in sewerred areas may redirect greywater by means of:

- manual bucketing;
- connecting a flexible hose to a washing machine outlet;
- greywater diversion devices (with Council approval) and treatment plants by licensed plumbers, connected to an irrigation hose; and
- surface or sub-surface system (with Council approval).

Care should be taken if reusing greywater because of:

- potential health risks to humans; and
- potential for environmental damage to soils, ground water, and waterways caused by increased nutrient and chemical levels.

Please note that the requirements regarding greywater disposal is regulated under the *Plumbing & Drainage Act 2018* to ensure that greywater run-off does not cause a danger or health risk.

Do I need any approvals to divert greywater?

You will need a Council permit before installing either:

- a greywater diversion device, which diverts greywater from the bath, shower, hand basin and/or laundry to an irrigation hose, or;
- a greywater treatment system which collects and treats it to a high standard for reuse as garden irrigation.

Can I store untreated greywater?

No, untreated greywater should not be stored.

Where can I get more information?

For further information please contact Council's Regulatory Services Team on 1300 79 49 29.

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Telephone us
1300 79 49 29



Email us
enquiry@frasercoast.qld.gov.au

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