

Landscape your property wisely

Don't place tannin or tan bark over the lids or system inspection points, ideally leave them clear and easily accessible. Don't water the garden or wash the car near the absorption trench.

Small shrubs and plants may be grown over the absorption or sand filter area but root systems from large trees can crack pipes and should be avoided. These plants are suitable:

- Cannas
- Hosta
- Zenobia
- Baura sessiliflora
- Leycesteria
- Hembrocallis
- Dwarf salvia
- Melaluca gibbosa
- Bonfire salvia
- Heleniums
- Japanese anemones
- Japanese irises
- N.Z. Flax
- Almia angustifolia
- Sprengelia

Plan carefully

Septic tanks and disposal systems should be located in garden, lawn, and vegetated areas and be kept clear of:

- vehicles, driveways and car parks
- paved, sealed or gravel surfaces
- areas subject to long periods of shade, inundation or stormwater run-off
- stormwater systems
- swimming pools
- tennis courts
- buildings, decking, garages and carports
- underground service pipes for gas, electricity, phone, water and drainage
- fruit and vegetables for human consumption
- livestock
- water bores.

What causes septic system problems?

The tank contains too much scum and sludge

If the tank doesn't get pumped out, solids will flow out of it and block your absorption trenches, pumps or sand filter.

Solution: Desludge your system every three years, more frequently for high usage.

Overloading the system with water

High water usage causes water to flow quickly through the septic tank before the bacteria can treat the waste. This is common in holiday homes.

Solution: Use less water, install water efficient fixtures.

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, contact us:

- 📞 5950 1373
- ✉️ septics@mornpen.vic.gov.au
- 🌐 mornpen.vic.gov.au/septictanks

Want more information?

- 📞 1300 850 600 or 5950 1373
 - 🌐 mornpen.vic.gov.au
 - 📘 facebook.com/MornPenShire
 - 🐦 @MornPenShire
 - ✉️ Private Bag 1000, Rosebud VIC 3939
 - TTY:** 133 677 then ask for 1300 850 600
 - Speak & Listen users:** (speech-to-speech) 1300 555 727 then ask for 1300 850 600
 - NRS:** Connect to NRS on relayservice.com.au then ask for 1300 850 600
- Funded by local, Victorian and Commonwealth governments

Septic health: the facts

Wastewater disposal is a significant environmental issue on the Mornington Peninsula.



MORNINGTON
PENINSULA
Shire

Do I have a septic tank system?

On the Mornington Peninsula there are many un-sewered rural, residential and commercial areas. When purchasing land within the Shire you should find out if a sewer network is available by contacting South East Water on ☎ 131 694.

It is your responsibility as the property owner to find out whether the property is sewered or on a septic tank system. In areas where there is no sewer, an approved, suitably designed septic tank system must be installed and maintained in accordance with the Shire's permit conditions.

You can apply for a copy of your septic tank permit at
☎ mornpen.vic.gov.au/septic_tanks

Do I need a septic tank system?

The Shire requires all proposed residential developments connect to the available sewer network unless a wastewater reuse system has been or will be installed meeting the Environment Protection Authority's sustainable re-use guidelines (EPA Publication 891.4).

To confirm if your property is in an area with a sewer network contact South East Water at ☎ betterconnected.com.au

How does a septic tank system work?

When you flush the toilet, have a shower or wash dishes where does the water go? The water 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 by reactions occurring in the soil, and is absorbed by plants and the atmosphere.

The water exiting the treatment tank is not the same quality as tap water. Its reuse should be carefully considered.

How do I apply to install a septic 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 'Permit to Use'.

To find out more about the permit process, visit:
☎ mornpen.vic.gov.au/septic_tanks



If you're unsure ask the Shire's Environmental Health Team to help you.

How do I maintain my septic system?

Looking after your septic system can prevent problems and save on costly repairs and early replacement.

You should know where your system is and at least once a year take the time to consider the health of that system. Your obligations will also be stated on your permit conditions.

Different septic systems and maintenance requirements

Septic tank

- Service tank every three years
- Desludge every three years

Sand filter

- Annual service/check (if required)
- Desludge every three years
- Replace sand filter every 15 years (if required)

Mechanical treatment plant

- Quarterly service by approved service agent
- Desludge every three years (if required)

Worm farm

- Service at six and 18 months after installation then every two years thereafter.

What are the health warning signs of my system?

Your septic 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.

What records should I keep?

You have a responsibility to retain maintenance records for a period of five years after the maintenance activity.

To demonstrate you have a well functioning system, records can be forwarded to: ☎ septics@mornpen.vic.gov.au

Helpful hints

Do

Have your system regularly maintained by professionals

Get a service agreement in place to prompt you

Switch to bio-degradable or natural cleaners

Chemicals like paints, solvents, disinfectants, bleaches and pesticides can kill the helpful bacteria in your septic system. The bacteria help break down the effluent. Bicarb soda and white vinegar are good alternatives.

Be careful what you flush, wash or spray

Rethink these items entering your septic system:

- food scraps suitable for compost
- coffee grounds
- hair and dental floss
- tissues
- fats and oils
- cat litter
- nappy sanitisers

Non-biodegradable materials that enter your OWMS can cause blockages and unnecessary wear and tear.

Don't

Don't turn off treatment systems when the house is unoccupied

This can damage pumps, control panels and alarms and lead to costly repairs and failing systems.

Don't install garbage disposal units in kitchens

They can disrupt bacteria vital to breaking down effluent.