



Schedule of Maintenance

Aerated Wastewater Treatment Systems (AWTS)

With the introduction of the Building Act 2016 maintenance requirements are now required for all classes of building including dwellings.

It is now a requirement under the Building Regulations that the responsible owner must maintain the building and a maintainable plumbing installation in accordance with, amongst other things, a Schedule of Maintenance.

Much of the maintenance on the AWTS itself is performed by a service agent under a maintenance agreement which you both have signed. This is a requirement of a Certificate of Accreditation issued by the State Government. These requirements are included in the maintenance schedule along with matters pertaining to the maintenance of the land application area (the area where the treated wastewater is managed e.g. a spray or surface drip irrigation area, a sub-surface irrigation area or trenches/beds).

These form part of the maintainable plumbing installation which are also required to be maintained. Such maintenance may include:

For an AWTS with sub-surface irrigation:

- Ensuring that the AWTS is connected to the irrigation area at all times.
- Regular mowing to keep the grass relatively short.
- Ensuring that there are no holes and depressions in the soil in the irrigation area.
- Ensuring that none of the drip pipe is exposed.
- Ensuring that wastewater does not pool on the irrigation area.
- Ensuring that wastewater does not run-off or pool outside the irrigation area.

For an AWTS with surface (spray irrigation or surface drip irrigation)

- Ensuring that the AWTS is connected to the irrigation area at all times.
- Maintaining the area(s) relatively free from weeds and long grass.
- Maintaining mulch/friable material depth at approx 150mm over the entire irrigation area(s).
- Replacing dead/dying plants as necessary.
- Ensuring that the distribution system (sprinklers/drippers and piping) is in good condition and evenly distributes effluent over the irrigation area(s).
- All spray heads are properly staked to hold the sprinkler in place.
- All piping is covered.
- Ensuring that the sprinklers/drippers and piping are suitable for treated wastewater.
- The irrigation piping remains on the designated irrigation area at all times.
- Any irrigation sprinklers do not spray wastewater outside the designated area.
- Waste water doesn't pool or run off the designated area.
- The irrigation area is free from edible vegetation.
- Erect and maintain signs on the irrigation area that treated wastewater is being irrigated and contact should be avoided.

For an AWTs with trenches or beds

- Ensuring that the AWTs is connected to the trenches/beds at all times.
- Regular mowing to keep the grass relatively short.
- Ensuring that there are no holes and depressions in the soil over the trenches/beds.
- Ensuring that the trenches/beds are protected from vehicles, animal traffic and damage from burrowing animals.
- Ensuring that no paving, paths, driveways, decking or similar is placed or constructed over any part of the trenches/beds.
- Ensuring that wastewater does not pool on or outside the trenches/beds.

Why this maintenance is important?

Even though the wastewater treated by the AWTs is of a high standard there is still a risk to health should people come into contact with the treated wastewater. Land application area maintenance is therefore designed to get the treated water out of reach of people as quickly as possible and to ensure that the distribution system is in good condition to be able to achieve this.

Just as you wouldn't wait until your car breaks down or has problems before you get it fixed, you shouldn't wait until your land application area shows signs of failure or has problems before doing something about it.

However, unlike a car that can be fixed, by the time a land application area has problems it can cost a significant amount of money to fix. Your service agent is required to report on the land application area at each service so, any issues, should be brought to your and Council's attention fairly quickly.

Where your AWTs has an irrigation area, under the Schedule of Maintenance, you are required to maintain a certain square meterage of irrigation area. This area has been designed to accept the total amount of wastewater that is generated from the dwelling based on the potential occupancy of the dwelling and a standard amount of water being used by each person per day. Overloading the wastewater system with additional people or excessive water use may result in wastewater running off or pooling on the irrigation area. This not only leads to potential health and environmental issues but it will also provide an environment to breed insects such as mosquitoes. It is therefore important that you maintain the square meterage and do not overload the system. See InfoSheet – Looking After Your Waste Water Management System for more information.

Desludging

Routine desludging is a requirement on the Certificate of Accreditation for some AWTs and this is reflected in the Schedule of Maintenance. Regardless of the type, make or model of AWTs you have, you are required to have it desludged whenever the service agent says that desludging is required.

As Council now has to administer the maintenance schedules and has a responsibility, along with owners, to ensure that systems are maintained, it is important that matters such as desludging is carried out in an ordered, systematic and managed manner. Council has therefore set-up a system to ensure that this important regular maintenance occurs through a reminder process.

You will receive a reminder letter if your system has a desludging requirement.

Under the Building Act 2016 you are required to ensure that this maintenance occurs.

For further information or advice please contact Council's Environmental Health Services on 6217 9570.