

FACT SHEET

DECOMMISSIONING A SEPTIC TANK

This information sheet outlines reasons and procedures for the decommissioning of Septic tanks.

Reasons for Decommissioning

Under Health Act Regulations, where a property has already been connected to the sewer or connection to the sewer is available within 90m, the owner of the property is required to decommission all on-site sewerage apparatus (e.g. septic tanks & leach drains) under the following circumstances:

- There is a material change in the use of the premises, decommissioning is to occur not more than 60 days after the day on which the change in use occurred.
- When there is a change in ownership of a property, decommissioning is to occur not more than 60 days after ownership of the property has changed.
- Foundations for a building on the premises are to be built closer than 1.2 metres from the apparatus or a building is to be constructed above the apparatus, decommissioning must occur before building works commence.
- An on-site apparatus fails (i.e. the system is no longer able to dispose of the wastewater in a compliant manner).

Procedure for decommissioning

1. Septic tanks leach drains and soakwells must be completely emptied by a Licensed Liquid Waste Contractor.
2. After emptying, septic tanks leach drains and soakwells must be completely removed from the site.
3. The excavations must be filled with clean fill (e.g. yellow sand and then thoroughly compacted).
4. Once the tanks and leach drains are filled and compacted with sand contact the City Environmental Health Service on 9021 9600 to arrange an inspection.

If the removal works are compliant, a Certificate will be issued by the City to confirm that the septic system has been properly decommissioned.

If it is not practicable to remove septic tanks, leach drains or soakwells (i.e. if access is not available for machinery) the following action can be taken;

- All septic tanks leach drains and soakwells must be completely emptied by a Licensed Liquid Waste Contractor.
- The lids must be removed and the bottom of septic tanks broken up.
- The tanks leach drains and soak wells must be backfilled with clean fill e.g., yellow sand and then thoroughly compacted.

- Note - a clearance inspection and Certificate (see point 4 above) is still required.

If the property is to be sold and since the cost associated with such decommissioning can exceed \$1,000, it is necessary to obtain some assurances that decommissioning has already occurred. If it has not occurred, such costs should be taken into consideration by purchasers at the time of offer and acceptance, because the legislation states that it is the “new property owner” who must carry out the required decommissioning with sixty (60) days of a change of property ownership.

More Information

Contact the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder Environmental Health Services.