

Q If I own an Aerated Treatment System and already pay a service agent to come four times a year, why should I have to pay for a Council inspection?

A The industry of servicing aerated treatment systems is still in its infancy. At this point in time the Council inspection is one of the only quality control regulators of this industry. It is hoped that new courses that have been recently developed will enable duly authorised service agents to conduct the license check in the future. In the mean time where inspections are required they will generally be conducted by, or under the supervision of, Environmental Health Officers from the Council. Since the introduction of the Septic Safe program and regulatory reforms, there has been continued development of new training courses for service agents.

Q Why am I not connected to the sewer mains?

A Unfortunately not all suburbs within the Local Government Area (LGA) are connected to the sewer mains. Sydney Water is the authority responsible for the sewerage systems within our LGA. Sydney Water has an established priority sewerage program for unsewered areas. More information on this program can be found on Sydney Water's website www.sydneywater.com.au.



Customer Service offices at
37 John Street, Camden and 19 Queen Street, Narellan
PO Box 183, Camden NSW 2570

24 Hours Phone: 02 4654 7777
Fax: 02 4654 7829

Email: mail@camden.nsw.gov.au
Website: www.camden.nsw.gov.au

Hours: 8.30am - 5pm Monday to Friday (Camden Office)
Hours: 8.30am - 5pm Monday to Friday (Narellan Office)

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www.camden.nsw.gov.au



camden council
septic safe



The Wallis Lakes Incident

In 1996 there was a food poisoning incident that originated on the Central Coast from Oyster Farms found in the Lakes system there. Hundreds of people were poisoned and several people died.

This incident was traced back to the consumption of oysters from a farm in the Wallis Lakes area. Studies linked failing septic tanks to the contaminated oysters.

The State Government undertook a survey that showed up to 70% of sewage management systems were experiencing some type of failure. Surprisingly, many new systems were also not working efficiently through incorrect installation, maintenance and management.

This has led to the development of new legislation which stipulates that every on-site sewage management facility in NSW will be inspected to ensure it is not having an adverse impact on the health of people or the surrounding environment.

Camden Council estimates that there are approximately 3,000 on-site sewage management systems within the Camden Local Government Area (LGA).



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Q Who is being inspected?

A All properties with an on-site sewage management system will be inspected.

Q How often will the system be inspected?

A All sewage management systems are to be registered with Council. Each system will be assessed upon the initial inspection and categorised into low, moderate or high risk. Low risk systems will be inspected every 6 years, moderate risk every 4 years and high risk every 2 years. Upon a satisfactory inspection, Council will issue an approval to operate the septic system on your land with a nominated renewal date. This approval will include conditions for the safe operation and maintenance of your on-site sewage management system.

Q What is the 'Approval to Operate' fee for?

A The 'Approval to Operate' fee is a service charge that covers the initial Council inspection of your system (additional inspections will be charged an inspection fee per inspection) and administration costs associated with the program. The fee is an annual fee that is included in your rates.

Q Do I need to desludge my septic tank?

A During the inspection a Council officer will advise you if the tank is required to be desludged. It is recommended that you de-sludge your system every 3-5 years. Desludging the tank unnecessarily can be costly and may prevent your system from working efficiently.

Q Is all wastewater to go to the septic tank?

A Yes. Recent studies have indicated that greywater (washing machine water, shower water, basin waters) can contain high levels of potentially dangerous pathogens. So all greywater must go to the septic tank. All toilet wastes should also go to the septic tank.

Q What happens if the system is failing?

A A Council officer will work closely with you to ensure you understand why your system is failing and how to fix it. If your sewage management system is failing, Council may issue you with an Order under the Local Government Act 1993 or take alternative action to ensure that the problems with your system are rectified.

