

SEPTIC TIMES

WAIKATO'S 'REGULAR' PAPER

www.effluent.co.nz

ISSUE 3/2004

Your Septic Tank dies just after you've moved in...So who pays for it?



You - the purchaser!

Conducting a septic system evaluation report prior to the sale or purchase of a property is good practise protecting both the buyer and seller.

Most importantly, the evaluation helps to protect the value of the buyer's investment by ensuring that the system is functioning properly and will continue to do so. It also protects the buyer from potentially tremendous costs of system repair or replacement soon after the sale.

Interestingly, the majority of emergency calls received for failed systems are those from new property owners.

For the seller (and also real estate agent), a septic system evaluation will minimise the possibility of unknowingly selling a house with a defective or failing system, and could help avoid possible embarrassment that might arise as a result. A properly functioning system can also be a good selling point and enhance the value of the house.

The evaluation should definitely be done before the sale is completed and should be included in the "Special Conditions" section of the Sale & Purchase Agreement.

As a minimum, the evaluation should examine these things:

- The location, age & size of the septic system.
- The soil conditions, drainage, seasonal water table and flooding possibilities on the site where the septic system is located.
- The history of the system if records are available. (Check www.septicTank.co.nz)
- A check on building alterations to determine whether structural changes have been made to the plumbing that would increase flow to the septic system beyond capacity. (Slow-flushing toilets and slow drains may indicate a failing system.)
- The date the septic tank was last cleaned. (Emptying of the septic tank if not recently cleaned).
- The condition of the absorption field; Looking for evidence of effluent reaching the soil surface (ponding), & looking for evidence of heavy equipment having been on the effluent field, causing compaction and possible damage.

Note: As a result of recent Council changes to sewage disposal charges (see Issue 2) - **you will be charged** for any solids accumulated in the septic tank prior to property settlement. Therefore it is in the purchaser's best interest to have it cleaned (and checked) before possession.

PÉRIODES SEPTIQUES

Oodles de poo laiss   a pu vous coter ch  rement en nature - caveat emptor!

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Register your tank on-line now.

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SETTING THE STANDARD

How a Septic Tank works - Part 3

The Mushroom - otherwise known as the vent or, "that ugly thing" in the middle of the lawn. A simple device for allowing air ventilation from the inlet pipe when flushing water into the tank. That's all it does. That's all it should be used for.

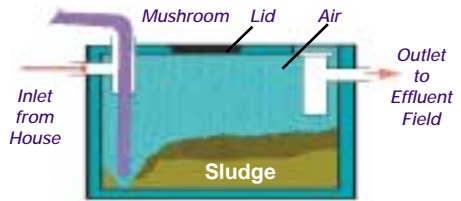
There are however, many occasions where the septic tank is "cleaned/emptied" by operators putting their hoses down the mushroom and sucking what contents they can out of the septic tank, with most owners totally oblivious to the ineffectiveness of such a practise.

The resultant invoice in such cases is for the removal of "water" and the privilege of their visit. Whereas the invoice for removing the solid contents (accumulated) will come on that day when the system blocks up and either the tank is cleaned properly or the owner is sold on the necessity of a new tank and effluent line.

This procedure described is in fact, very harmful to the successful operation of your septic tank and will, without doubt, cause blockage to the effluent field. This is not really science. The hose goes down the pipe, the liquid and a minor quantity of sludge is removed. The remaining solids and sludge accumulate at the bottom of the tank.

As further liquid/effluent is introduced to the tank, rising solids will find their way up the outlet pipe. Also, since the tank is already half full of solids, the time available for solids to settle from the newly introduced effluent is con-

siderably reduced and so further solid matter exits to the effluent field damaging the effluent line.



Tank cleaned by putting hose down mushroom

This method of cleaning will inevitably cause the entire septic system to fail causing considerable inconvenience to the household and requiring high capital outlay to remedy.

When you have your septic tank cleaned, be sure to use a reputable company and if possible, check to see that the tank has been entirely emptied.

By the way, the cheapest price is seldom the best!

Remember!

If you've just purchased – get your tank cleaned now. It can save you a lot of expense and bother when things go wrong.

Tank of the month

After reading the previous article - why would a "professional" septic tank company clean out a septic tank through the mushroom, time and time again, knowing that the job would result in a catastrophe.

It was a hot day and this hole was deep! The clay hard - very hard, like it had been fired in the fires of hell itself. And to make matters even worse, when I

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got to the lid, I discovered that the maverick who made this tank (on-site) had visions of landing a 747 on it, making it out of 6 inch concrete! Whoa, was that lid heavy!

By this stage I was convinced there was nothing on mother earth that could make me wish more that I'd stayed in bed this morning.

Oh, did I have a surprise waiting in store for me!

Mere words inadequately describe the resultant contents of pumping out a tank through the mushroom, every two years for a period of 10 years.

Fortunately I survived the ordeal. However, the owners of this Bruntwood property of 25 years were very disheartened when they came to realise the extent of the deception.

This was a new tank and effluent field installed 12 years earlier.

Story goes that the same company who had been cleaning the old system for the previous 10 years, had done so - you guessed it - through the mushroom, and when the effluent line and tank were all blocked up solid, they kindly informed the owners that it was

time to install a complete new system - only to continue cleaning the new tank through the mushroom. As luck would have it for the owners, it was a weekend that the whole mess came to the surface - up through the gully traps, all over the garden and onto the lawns

After much phoning around to find a company who would clean their tank (and the mess) on a weekend, the owners called Effluent Services who came immediately to their rescue...



FREE
 Contact Effluent Services
 for your next tank clean and you go
 in the draw for a free tank clean

FREE
 FREE TANK CLEAN FOR THIS ISSUE:
 J Hart
 State Highway 1, Cambridge

PRACTICAL OPERATING TIPS

- Practise water conservation where possible, especially in wet seasons;
- Avoid showering and bathing while the dishwasher or laundry are in use;
- Try to distribute the laundry evenly throughout the week;
- Rather than pulling the bath plug out - tilt it to one side to empty the bath;
- Don't pour cooking oils, fats or grease down the kitchen sink;
- Wipe fatty/oily pans with a paper towel before washing;
- Avoid waste disposals - they place extra load on the system;
- Don't flush non-biodegradable objects like pads, condoms, nappies etc;
- Never flush toxic substances like paint, oil, pesticides, solvents etc;
- Never put your head in a septic tank;
- Keep a plan of where you septic tank and drains are located;
- Have your tank emptied regularly - normally every two years;
- Ensure your tank is cleaned correctly;
- If you have a filter - clean it regularly (normally 6 monthly);
- Don't construct buildings, decks, driveways or paths over the tank;
- Plant trees with extensive or deep roots away from the tank;
- Divert storm water runoff away from effluent/soakage field;
- Keep a maintenance history. Register your tank on-line at www.septic-tank.co.nz

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Karaoke with Dean

When you bust for a poo
 And you're close to the loo
 That's Amore
 When you're bound up inside
 And the door's open wide
 That's Amore
 When you ache at the seams
 And the toi-let seat gleams,
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The scoop on Poop

Poop has an unpleasant odour - the result of anaerobic bacterial action. Bacteria produce smelly, sulphur-rich organic compounds such as indole, skatole, and mercaptans, and the inorganic gas we all know of as hydrogen sulphide (H₂S). These are the same compounds that give odour when passing wind.

Effluent Services is totally committed to the management of all Domestic & Industrial Liquid Waste with a strong emphasis on Environmental and Health & Safety policy.

To update your knowledge on your septic system or for further information on Effluent Services and how we can be of assistance to you, visit us at:

www.effluent.co.nz

GHOST POOP

The kind where you know you've pooped, but there is no Poop in the toilet

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CAUTION TO HOME OWNERS AND HOME BUYERS:

The information herein and in future prints is general in nature. Since conditions and requirements vary considerably between individual sites, always obtain qualified expert advice pertaining to the specific system about which you may have questions.

POO FOR THOUGHT !

Why is it that when you eat corn, no matter how much you chew it, it still comes out whole?

SITTING ON THE THRONE

After considerable time quietly observing the pumping out of their septic tank, this little girl knowledgeable volunteered the information that "even the Queen uses the toilet".

Gives a totally different meaning to the term, "sitting on the throne" doesn't it?



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MANY THANKS to those who contributed to this issue of **SEPTIC TIMES**.

ALL ENQUIRIES/ARTICLES TO: editor@effluent.co.nz or
THE EDITOR, SEPTIC TIMES, PO BOX 440, CAMBRIDGE

SOULEVEMENT DE LA NORME