

DECOMMISSIONING OF SEPTIC SYSTEMS

Once a sewer connection is available to a property, it must be connected within five years of the Water Corporation advising of its availability. If the property is sold, it has to be connected within one year of the settlement date.

Septic tanks must be 'decommissioned' to prevent them from collapsing in the future, possibly causing damage or injury.

You can contact the Water Corporation on 13 13 95 for more information on the infill sewerage program.

When do I have to decommission?

The City of Kwinana strongly recommends that onsite effluent disposal systems be decommissioned soon after a property is connected to mains sewer.

However, the Regulations legally require decommissioning at the following times:

a.) Not more than 60 days after ownership of the property is changed.

The cost of decommissioning can exceed \$1,000, so it is necessary to obtain some assurances that it has occurred. Often both the person selling the property and the prospective buyer negotiate the decommissioning requirements during settlement, however, it is ultimately the purchasers responsibility to ensure that the system is decommissioned.

b.) If the foundations for a building on the premises are to be built closer than 1.2m from the apparatus or a building is to be constructed above the apparatus.

Decommissioning must occur before any building works commence.

c.) If there is a 'material change of use' of the property, within 60 days.

For example a residence is turned into a business, then the system must be decommissioned not more than 60 days after the change of use has occurred.

How do I decommission my old system?

1. Septic tanks, leach drains and soak wells must be completely emptied by a Licensed Liquid Waste Contractor.
2. After emptying, septic tanks, leach drains and soak wells should, if possible, be completely removed from site. If it is not practicable to remove the septic tanks, leach drains or soak wells (eg if access is not available for machinery) the lids must be removed and the bottom of the septic tanks broken up.
3. The excavations, septic tanks and leach drains or soak wells must then be filled with clean fill eg yellow sand, and then thoroughly compacted.

Does the City of Kwinana keep records of decommissioned systems?

City of Kwinana Environmental Health Services maintains records of properties that have notified the City of Kwinana during the decommissioning for an inspection to be undertaken and a Certificate of Decommissioning is issued, however, under the Regulations it is ultimately the responsibility of the individual property owner to ensure that they are and that records are maintained.

In some circumstances City of Kwinana Environmental Health Officers may be able to assist in the location of old systems. However, if layouts/plans are provided they should be used as a guide only.

Need Further Information?

Additional information regarding the decommissioning of septic tanks can be obtained by contacting City of Kwinana Environmental Health Services on 9439 0250

Disclaimer: This document is a guide only. It is not a legal document.

For full details refer to the *Health (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1911* and *Health (Treatment of Sewage and Disposal of Effluent and Liquid Waste) Regulations 1974*.