



A GUIDE FOR HOME OWNERS

Looking after your treatment plant

Your home sewage treatment plant is a small treatment works that runs on good bacteria. Look after the bacteria and the plant looks after you. A few simple habits keep it working, keep smells away and save you money on callouts.

HOW YOUR SYSTEM WORKS

1

Primary tank

Solids settle and start to break down.

2

Aeration

The air blower feeds oxygen to good bacteria that clean the water.

3

Clarifier

Remaining solids settle out and are returned for treatment.

4

Disinfection

Chlorine tablets kill germs in the treated water.

5

Irrigation

The pump sprays or drips the treated water over your irrigation area.

PLEASE DO

- ✓ **Leave the power on, always.** The blower needs to run 24/7, even when you go away.
- ✓ **Spread out your washing** over the week rather than doing it all in one day.
- ✓ **Fix leaking taps and running toilets** quickly. Extra water flushes the plant out.
- ✓ **Use normal household cleaners in moderation.** Biodegradable, septic-safe products are best.
- ✓ **Scrape plates** into the bin and wipe greasy pans with paper towel before washing.
- ✓ **Keep the lids and control panel clear** and easy to get to. Don't cover them with soil, mulch, pavers or pot plants.
- ✓ **Keep up the regular servicing** your council requires, and call us if something seems wrong.

PLEASE DON'T

- ✗ **Flush anything but toilet paper.** No wet wipes (even "flushable" ones), nappies, pads, tampons, cotton buds, floss, condoms or cat litter.
- ✗ **Pour fats, oils or grease** down the sink, or put food scraps, coffee grounds or a garbage disposal unit into the system.
- ✗ **Use large amounts of bleach,** disinfectants, antibacterial products or drain cleaners. They kill the bacteria that do the work.
- ✗ **Tip paint, solvents, oils, pesticides or medicines** down any drain.
- ✗ **Connect roof water, stormwater, pool or spa water** to the system.
- ✗ **Switch the plant off** to stop an alarm, or leave it off.

WHAT WE DO AT EVERY SERVICE

- ✓ Check the air blower and clean or replace its filter
- ✓ Test the pump, alarm and floats
- ✓ Top up the chlorine tablets
- ✓ Check sludge levels in the tanks
- ✓ Test the treated water: pH, chlorine and clarity
- ✓ Check the irrigation area and sprinklers
- ✓ Lodge the service report (Form 11) with your council
- ✓ Send you a copy of the report

IF THE ALARM GOES OFF

Most plants have two alarms: a high water alarm for when the tank is filling up, and an air alarm for when the blower isn't pushing enough air. Many control panels show which one it is. Silencing the buzzer is fine, but don't ignore the light.

- 1 Check the power.** Make sure the plant's power point and the circuit breaker in your switchboard are on.
- 2 Water alarm? Check the irrigation.** Check the irrigation pump is plugged in and switched on, and the irrigation hose isn't kinked or squashed. Go easy on washing, the dishwasher and long showers.
- 3 Air alarm? Check the blower.** It should be humming and blowing air. If it's quiet, check it's plugged in. Sometimes the small hose to the alarm's pressure switch comes off: if you can see it's loose, push it back on. Don't open anything electrical.
- 4 Still going? Call us on 0495 096 532.** A plant can overflow within hours to days.

YOUR IRRIGATION AREA

- ✓ Keep cars, trailers and livestock off it, and don't build, pave or put a shed or pool over it.
- ✓ Keep the grass mowed and the sprinklers or drippers clear of long grass and garden.
- ✓ Don't grow fruit or vegetables for eating in the irrigation area.
- ✓ Keep children and pets away while it's spraying, and leave the warning signs in place.
- ✓ Tell us about soggy or smelly patches, pooling water, or effluent running off the area.

CHLORINE: IMPORTANT SAFETY WARNING

Only use chlorine tablets made for home treatment plants. **Never use pool chlorine** (stabilised or "trichlor" pool tablets) in your chlorinator.

Mixing different types of chlorine can cause a fire, an explosion or toxic gas. We top up your chlorine at every service. If you run out between services, call us rather than buying tablets.

SERVICING AND YOUR COUNCIL

Queensland councils require treatment plants to be serviced regularly by a licensed service technician. For most systems that's every three months. After each service a service report (Form 11) goes to your council, and you get a copy.

As the owner, you're responsible for keeping the system maintained. With an Effluent Works service agreement we remind you when it's due, do the service and lodge the Form 11 for you.

GOING AWAY OR LOST POWER?

Leave the plant switched on when you go away. After a long power cut or a big storm, check the alarm light once the power is back, and call us if it's on or you notice a smell.

SIGNS SOMETHING'S NOT RIGHT

- A sewage or rotten-egg smell around the plant or the yard
- Toilets or drains slow to empty, or gurgling
- Soggy, smelly or unusually lush green patches in the irrigation area
- Sprinklers not coming on, or spraying dark or smelly water
- Water pooling around the tank lids

Call us early. Small problems are quicker and cheaper to fix.



QUESTIONS, ALARMS OR SERVICING

0495 096 532

admin@effluentworks.com