

**litter and cigarettes should not be put down your toilet.** These can block your drains.

6. Backwash water from swimming pools, spa baths/pool (in excess of 680 litres) and water softeners is not allowed to enter your tank. It can only be discharged directly into your drain between the septic tank and your disposal system. You need Council approval for connecting a backwash facility to your drain.
7. Petrol or other flammable or explosive substances must not enter your tank.
8. Chemicals such as paints, varnishes, thinners, waste car oil, photographic solutions and pesticides must not be put down your toilet or sink as it affects the operation of your tank.
9. Building structures are not allowed to be built over your septic tank. Damage can be caused to the tank and result in expensive repairs and access for maintenance and emptying the tank can be prevented.

### Other Handy Hints

- So that your tank does not fill quickly with solids, try not to put grease, fat and

food scraps down your kitchen sink.

- If you are having trouble with blocked drains make sure the plumber raises your inspection openings to ground level so that any blocked drain can be easily accessed.
- Seal all openings to your tank to prevent mosquito breeding. vents should be covered with 1mm fiberglass mesh purchased from a hardware store.
- Please avoid planting trees and shrubs near your septic tank and drains. Roots can get into drains and tanks and cause blockages.
- If you build a driveway or path over your septic tank, make sure you raise the lid of the tank and inspection points to the ground level so that it can be accessed easily for emptying. A driveway or path must be engineered to ensure that the impact of traffic will not effect the structural integrity of your septic tank.



**Clare & Gilbert Valleys Council**

4 Gleeson Street  
CLARE SA 5453

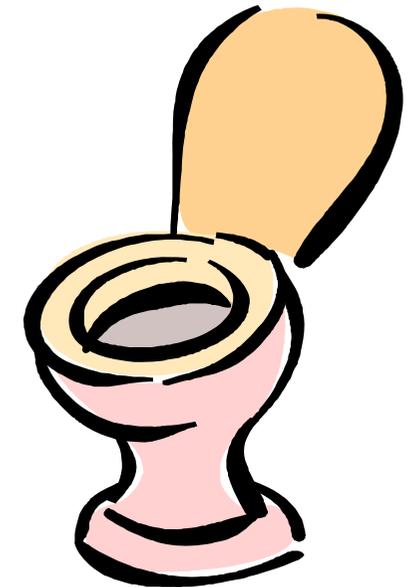
Ph: 08 88426400 Fax: 08 88423624

email: [admin@cgvc.sa.gov.au](mailto:admin@cgvc.sa.gov.au)

[www.claregilbertvalleys.sa.gov.au](http://www.claregilbertvalleys.sa.gov.au)

## Caring for your Septic Tank and Effluent Disposal System

 Environmental Health Information for a Healthy Community



An information brochure to assist you in understanding how to care for and maintain your Septic Tank System

## Did you know?

You have a waste control system that removes solid and liquid waste from your toilet, bathroom, laundry and kitchen and consists of:

- a tank that holds solid waste; and
- a disposal system that discharges the liquid waste.

Solids sink to the bottom of the tank and are broken down by bacteria. The liquid (called effluent) passes through the tank and empties into your disposal system.

Your disposal system could consist of:

- a soakage trench or soakage bed which disposes of the effluent below the surface of the ground; or
- a aerobic waste water treatment system or aerobic Sandfilter which disposes of chlorinated effluent onto an above ground surface irrigation area; or
- a connection to the Council's



## Who is responsible for maintaining a waste control system?

Under Health laws, Council is responsible for making sure you have your tank pumped out every four (4) years and that you maintain your system in good working order.

**The House Owner** is responsible for:

Repairing or replacing the household drains, that take your household wastes to your tank, when necessary;

- clearing blockages in the household drains;
- maintaining your tank and disposal system; and
- making sure you have the tank pumped out (desludged) at least once very four (4) years. **Unless you are connected to the Council's CWMS infrastructure in the towns of Clare, Riverton and Saddleworth where a contractor will perform the pumpout on a routine basis**

A tenant or House Owner must make sure that no inappropriate solids or liquids go into the tank and **must not alter, repair or replace any part of the tank or household drains without approval from Council.**

### What can you do?

Plenty! Let's work together and carry out the following practices to ensure you comply with health laws and you are maintaining your septic tank and effluent disposal system

1. Have your tank pumped out every four (4) years unless you are having problems with blockages in which case pump outs may have to be more frequent eg. every 2 years. Keep contractors receipt (if on CWMS) for your records in case you are asked when it was last pumped out.
2. Only use disinfectants, deodorants, detergents, antiseptics or germicides that are suitable for septic tanks and in small amounts. This will help with the operation of the tank and won't kill the bacteria that breakdown the solids. Check the product label for suitability.
3. Waste water must not be pumped from your septic tank to water the lawn and garden areas. The waste water contains harmful substances that could affect your family's health.
4. **It is illegal to connect a stormwater drain to your septic tank system.** Make sure that roof water, rainwater tank overflow and surface drainage water does not enter your tank, or drains, as it can overload your disposal system and can result in raw effluent seeping to ground level.
5. **Disposable nappies, sanitary napkins, tampons, condoms, paper towels, tissues, plastics, cat**