

Composting toilets or other blackwater (toilet waste) systems

Before installation, an application for the approval of a composting toilet or other blackwater (toilet waste) system must be submitted to the Department of Health.

Individual site or environmental considerations identified by Departmental officers when assessing the application may require the applicant to provide more details.

This guide specifies the information that must be provided with the application for assessment by the Department of Health for approval. Some treatment options have been provided.

Location & site characteristics

- A plan showing detailed directions to locate the property.
- A scaled plan of the property and all nearby land and buildings and the land use of nearby properties.
- A site plan showing the location of the house / building, boundaries, recreation areas, composting toilet (or other blackwater system) location and greywater treatment and disposal system
- Details of site characteristics, such as topography, proximity to any watercourses, bores, marine environment, etc.
- sub-surface disposal of primary or secondary treated greywater (for minimum of six persons and considering soil percolation rate) in accordance with the SAHC Code *Waste Control Systems- Standard for the Construction, Installation and Operation of Septic Tank Systems in South Australia* (see our [Onsite Systems](#) webpage) OR
- as a secondary treatment, a reedbed for treatment with surface (if disinfected) or sub-surface disposal of reedbed effluent; OR
- other type of secondary treatment system approved for installation in SA and achieving the reclaimed water quality required for the final reuse / disposal method of treated greywater; OR
- connection to SA Water sewerage or a private or council scheme.

Treatment & disposal of all wastewater

A composting toilet (or any other type blackwater treatment system) is part of an overall property wastewater management system. The following information on the management of the whole system is required.

Method of greywater treatment & disposal

Options include:

- a 1620L septic tank or other type of primary treatment approved for installation in SA;

AS/NZS 1547 - Onsite Domestic Wastewater Management may be used as a guide for designing alternative irrigation or land disposal systems with greywater or all wastewater.

Plumbing plan

The plan of the plumbing layout for the wastewater / greywater collection system must comply with *Australian Standard AS 3500.5*.



Wastewater Fact Sheet

Disposal of composted material or effluent from other black water systems

Method of disposal for composted material

Composted material must be buried for at least 6 months after a completed composting period of 12 months in the composting toilet system before the site can be used for food crop plantation.

Set backs for the burial of composted material

The burial site for composted material must have the same setbacks from any water courses, bores, wells, dams and the marine environment as for septic tank soakage systems described in the SAHC Code *Waste Control Systems- Standard for the Construction, Installation and Operation of Septic Tank Systems in South Australia* (see our [Onsite Systems](#) webpage).

Offsite disposal (if required)

If burial onsite is not possible then the offsite disposal method must be fully described in the application. The material must have completed a 12 month composting period in the composting toilet system before disposal.

Similarly for any other type of blackwater system the onsite or offsite disposal of the final blackwater effluent must be specified in the application.

New system designs

For a new composting toilet system design that has not previously been approved for installation in SA, the following additional information must be provided:

- chute and chamber details, material, design and operational details with supporting engineering calculations and specifications.

- details of the toilet enclosure, including the toilet seat, fly proofing features, ventilation mechanisms, and childproof structural precautions.
- details of access to the chute and chamber for removal of compost material.

A proposal for a blackwater system that has not previously been approved for installation in SA, must be supported by information on the material, design and operational details, with relevant engineering calculations and specifications when the application is submitted.

Additional information and engineering data may be required for Department of Health approval, depending on the site characteristics, wastewater source, and system design and operation requirements.

Contact

Wastewater Management
Public Health
SA Health

1st floor
Citi Centre Building
11 Hindmarsh Square
Adelaide SA 5000

PO Box 6, Rundle Mall
Adelaide SA 5000

Tel 08 8226 7100
Fax 08 8226 7102

ABN 97 643 356 590

Email: public.health@health.sa.gov.au
Web: www.health.sa.gov.au/pehs/environ-health-index.htm

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