

Connect for a cleaner environment

Sydney Water and Blue Mountains City Council are encouraging all eligible property owners to connect to the sewerage system.

By connecting you will be helping your local community achieve important health and environmental benefits.

The enclosed information has been prepared to make the connection process easier.



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Help protect the environment—connect today

Why should I connect?

Connection to the sewerage system will provide important benefits to you and your local community. Some of these benefits include:

- Cleaner waterways
- Protection of the environment
- Reduced public health risks
- Replacement of septic tank pump-out and maintenance costs with a flat sewer service charge
- Elimination of dampness and seepage into your yard
- Reduced odours
- The potential to store and use storm water for your garden through the conversion of your existing septic tank
- Choice to remove your existing on-site system
- Potential increase in your property's value.

What could happen if I don't connect?

- Continued risk to public health from leaking on-site systems
- Harmful nutrients can continue to affect the environment
- Continued odour nuisances and dampness problems
- Ongoing payment of septic tank pump-out and maintenance charges.

Do I have to connect?

It is a requirement under Section 124 of the Local Government Act, 1993 that premises which are situated within 75 metres of the sewerage system are connected within a specified time. Council is working in cooperation with Sydney Water to encourage property owners to connect to the sewerage system as soon as it becomes available.

To achieve this objective Blue Mountains City Council, as the body responsible for the regulation of on-site sewerage systems, has implemented an inspection program to monitor the progress of connection.

If a property is not working towards a connection within a reasonable amount of time of the sewer becoming available, Council will serve an order on the property owner requiring them to connect the dwelling to the sewerage system within a specified period of time. These orders can be issued in accordance with the Local Government Act and the Protection of the Environment Operations Act.

Further information regarding this policy is available online at www.legislation.nsw.gov.au or by contacting Blue Mountains City Council on 4780 5000.

Through our sewer connection policy for disadvantaged customers, Sydney Water, in partnership with community welfare agencies, may be able to provide financial assistance to customers assessed as being in financial hardship. For more information, please phone Sydney Water's Customer Service Centre on 13 2092.

Steps to connecting

- Step 1** Obtain several quotes from licensed plumber/drainers — see information Sheet 3.
- Have your Block Plan Diagram ready (will be posted to you on receipt of plumbing application and inspection fee).
- Make sure the plumbing quote that you choose includes:**
- Hydrostatic testing to ensure that your existing drainage is not leaking
 - Completion of remedial work required on your existing drainage to ensure it will pass a plumbing inspection
 - Installation and connection of new pipe work to the sewerage system
 - An update of your Block Plan Diagram with your new drainage details
 - Indication of the licensed plumber/drainers' availability to complete the work within your required timeframe.
- Step 2** Pay the application and inspection fee to Sydney Water—see information sheet 4.
- Step 3** Engage your licensed plumber/drainers to connect your property to the new sewerage system. Organise for your final effluent pump-out by a licensed pump-out operator.
- Step 4** Your licensed plumber/drainers will organise for a Sydney Water plumbing and drainage inspector to approve the new connection and the existing drainage on your property. **Your licensed plumber/drainers must be present for this inspection.** Give the inspector or your licensed plumber / drainers:
- Your updated Block Plan Diagram
 - Receipt for the plumbing application and inspection fee
 - Receipt confirming that the final effluent pump-out has been undertaken.
- Note:** If your connection fails the inspection, your licensed plumber/drainers will not be able to connect your property until the problem is corrected. Reinspection of your property's plumbing and drainage will incur a further charge — see information sheet 4.
- Step 5** If your property and the connection pass the inspection your licensed plumber/drainers can connect your property to the sewerage system.
- Step 6** Decommission your septic tank using an approved waste contractor — see information sheet 5.

Knowing your costs and savings

The sewer connection point on your property has been provided free of charge by Sydney Water.

The cost of disconnecting your on-site system and connecting your household plumbing to the sewerage system is the responsibility of the property owner. You will need to arrange for a licensed plumber or drainer to do this work. It is recommended that you obtain a number of quotes.

Before you can connect to the sewerage system a Sydney Water plumbing and drainage inspector will need to inspect the new work and your existing household drainage. If you have an existing toilet with a 'septic pan' that is operating effectively you will not be required to replace it with a standard design if you connect to the new service.

When you connect all costs associated with your existing on-site system will cease including pump-out costs, running costs, planned and unplanned maintenance and any annual council licence fees.

	ITEM	AMOUNT	PAYABLE BY	PAYABLE TO
INITIAL	Moving the connection from the old system to the sewer.	Varies depending on many factors, including the length of any additional pipe, the type of soil or rock on your land and the condition of your existing pipes and fixtures.	Property owner.	Licensed plumber / drainer.
INITIAL	Plumbing and drainage application and inspection fee.	As fees and charges are subject to change, contact Sydney Water on 13 2092 for a current cost.	Property owner or licensed plumber/drainer.	Sydney Water.
INITIAL	Sludge removal, clean out and decommissioning of existing on-site system.	Effluent clean out costs are dependent upon the licensed pump-out operator.	Property owner	Licensed pump-out operator
ONGOING	Sewerage service charge.	As fees and charges are subject to change, contact Sydney Water on 13 2092 for a current cost.	Property owner	Sydney Water. (Will be included in your existing account)

Selecting your licensed plumber/drainer

The property owner is responsible for engaging a licensed plumber/drainer to connect the household drainage to the sewerage system. It is important to check with your licensed plumber/drainer that your existing drainage meets the current plumbing codes. The drainage will need to be air or water tested prior to connection to the sewerage system. Any remedial work required should be completed before the test to avoid undue delays and additional re-inspection costs.

Choose your licensed plumber/drainer

Your choice of licensed plumber/drainer will depend on who you believe will do the job professionally, on time and for a reasonable price. This may be based on referrals from friends or family, or based on your personal assessment following the quotation.

Other information to consider when choosing your licensed plumber/drainer includes:

- Checking that they have a valid and current licence issued by the NSW Office of Fair Trading. Plumber/drainers will be able to show you their licence card when you meet them. You can also check a plumber/drainers licence on the NSW Office of Fair Trading web site at: www.licencecheck.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/licence-check/search.do
- their availability to complete the work on a mutually agreeable date
- Whether the licensed plumber/drainers quote includes all the elements of the work to be undertaken including a hydrostatic test of the household drainage
- Clear indication that the licensed plumber/drainer will meet the requirements of the NSW Code of Practice and the Australian Standard.

The connection and existing remaining sanitary systems will be inspected for compliance to the current codes and standards by a Sydney Water plumbing and drainage inspector.

If you have a dispute with a plumber/drainer that you are unable to resolve contact the Office of Fair Trading on 13 32 20 or visit their website www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au.

Obtain quotes from licensed plumber/drainers

It is recommended that you obtain two or three written quotes from different licensed plumber/drainers. Obtaining more than one quote will allow you to compare costs and make the best decision for your needs. All quotes should clearly show the cost of:

- Connecting to the new system
- Remedial work that may be required
- Decommissioning your existing septic system (if applicable).

The Master Plumbers Association of NSW has a 'Find a Plumber Service'. They can be contacted on 02 8789 7000 or online at www.findaplumber.com.au.

Local classified directories and newspapers also list licensed plumbers and drainers. Often a licensed plumber is also licensed as a drainer and may be listed under this heading in the directories.

Make an application to connect

A. Submit your application and plumbing inspection fees to Sydney Water

The application and inspection fees can be paid in advance of connection.

Payment options include:

- **Post a cheque or money order** (made payable to 'Sydney Water') to:

PO Box 399
Parramatta NSW 2124
- **Your licensed plumber/drainer pays the fee** (check if this will be at an additional cost to you)
- **Pay in person** at any Sydney Water customer centre or Quick Check agent.

You can see the full list of Sydney Water Quick Check agents by going to the Sydney Water website www.sydneywater.com.au>Building Developing and Plumbing>Quick Check.

Sydney Water Customer Service Centres are located at:

- Ground Floor 115-123 Bathurst Street, Sydney 2000
- 120 Smith Street, Wollongong 2500

Office hours are 8.30am—5.00pm Monday to Friday. Sydney Water will provide you with a receipt (if you pay in person at their office) or post your receipt to you along with a copy of the Block Plan Diagram for your property.

Strata titled properties require one application per connection point (to be submitted by the Body Corporate).

B. Give the receipt to your licensed plumber/drainer

Your licensed plumber/drainer will give this receipt to the Sydney Water plumbing and drainage inspector at the time of inspection.

C. Give the Block Plan Diagram to your licensed plumber/drainer

A Block Plan Diagram showing the infrastructure that has been installed on your property will be provided to you once you have paid your application and plumbing inspection fees. This Block Plan Diagram will assist your licensed plumber/drainer in preparing a quote and a final Block Plan Diagram for your property.

Your licensed plumber/drainer will need to give the Block Plan Diagram to the Sydney Water plumbing and drainage inspector who will use it during the inspection of your property.

If the drainage fails a Sydney Water inspection your plumber/drainer will not be allowed to connect your property to the sewerage system. The source of any problem will need to be found and then rectified at your cost. A new inspection date can then be arranged. The Sydney Water plumbing inspector will return to reinspect the rectified work and inspection will incur a further charge.

Commercial/industrial premises should contact Sydney Water Commercial & Industrial Customer Services on 0419 400 723 or 9828 8560 for details of the special arrangements required.

Decommissioning your septic tank

This guideline has been developed from the recommendations of the NSW Health Advisory Note 3 — October 2000 'Destruction, Removal or Reuse of septic tanks, collection wells and aerated wastewater treatment systems (AWTS)'.

This guideline has been slightly modified and adopted by Blue Mountains City Council predominately for those premises that will be connecting to the sewerage system in the Blue Mountains.

In decommissioning your septic tank system, it is a requirement of Blue Mountains City Council that a final clean out service be undertaken to remove all sludge and effluent from inside the tank. Your licensed plumber/drainier will need to provide Sydney Water's plumbing and drainage inspector with a receipt confirming that the final effluent pump out has been undertaken.

The reuse of septic tanks, collection wells and AWTS is primarily for the storage of water that is to be used for the watering of gardens and lawns.

Under no circumstances are septic tanks, collection wells and AWTS to be reused as vessels for holding water for domestic (washing and drinking) purposes.

If you wish to reuse an underground septic tank for any purpose, you should request advice on Sydney Water's backflow prevention regulations from a licensed plumber/drainier accredited in backflow prevention.

Where it is feasible to reuse a septic tank there are several precautions that need to be observed to ensure there is no danger to health.

The reuse or removal of a septic tank, collection well or AWTS shall only be carried out if another approved method of effluent disposal is available and connected to the premises concerned.

To ensure that the existing septic tank, collection well or AWTS does not pose a risk to health, one of the following methods should be followed.

Septic tank, collection well and AWTS: remaining on site and not to be reused

Step 1 The contents are to be removed by a licensed pump out operator.

Step 2 The sides of the tank should be hosed down as the tanker is removing the contents.

Step 3 The tank is to be disinfected by broadcasting either chlorine or builder's lime.

Step 4 The lid and those parts of the walls above the ground should be demolished and collapsed into the tank. Several holes should be punched into the bottom of the tank and the tank filled with clean soil.

Septic tank, collection well and AWTS: reused on site as a stormwater storage tank for watering the garden

Step 1 For reuse on site as an irrigation tank, the contents are to be removed by a licensed pump out operator.

Step 2 The sides of the tank should be hosed down as the tanker is removing the contents.

Step 3 The tank is to be mosquito proofed.

Step 4 The tank should be filled with fresh water and disinfected to a minimum level of 5mg/L of free residual chlorine with a half hour contact time.

Step 5 The tank is to be labelled as containing water unfit for human consumption.

Step 6 Non-standard water fittings or irrigation fittings are to be used and no cross connection is to be possible with any potable (drinking) supply.

Step 7 Any overflow is to be directed to the stormwater system or as specified by Council.

Step 8 Your licensed plumber/drainier accredited in backflow prevention can advise you on the backflow protection required on your installation.

Septic tank, collection well and AWTS: removed and relocated

Step 1 The contents are to be removed by a licensed pump out operator.

Step 2 The sides of the tank should be hosed down as the tanker is removing the contents.

Step 3 The tank should be filled with fresh water and disinfected to a minimum level of 5mg/L of free residual chlorine with a half hour contact time.

Step 4 The tank may then be emptied and removed.

Step 5 Approval from the council is to be obtained where the tank is to be reinstalled at another site within the local government area. Council can only grant approval for the installation of tanks and AWTS that have a current accreditation certificate issued by the NSW Health Department.

Step 6 All tanks and in particular those of reinforced concrete may only be removed where the structural integrity of the tank can be maintained. Only tanks certified as complying with AS1546 shall be reused as septic tanks.

Step 7 If the tank is to be removed, relocated and reused as an irrigation tank, the tank is still to be emptied, cleaned and disinfected as outlined above.

Step 8 The irrigation lines are to be disinfected by flushing with fresh water containing at least 5mg/L of free residual chlorine. Should the irrigation lines be connected to the reticulated supply, an approved backflow prevention device is to be installed at your cost and approved by the water supply authority.

Step 9 The approval conditions for a new installation as required by council are applicable.