

Wastewater consent compliance

A guide for consent holders



► Find out more: phone 09 301 0101
or visit aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

Introduction

This fact sheet provides information for resource consent holders about wastewater discharge consents and consent compliance.

On-site wastewater discharge consents

Your resource consent allows you to discharge treated wastewater onto or into land as long as you meet the conditions of that consent. It is a legal document granted under the provisions of the Resource Management Act (1991), so it's important to keep a copy of the resource consent and any associated letters or other documentation in your records.

Consent conditions

Resource consent conditions of your wastewater discharge consent are designed to ensure wastewater is treated and disposed of in a way that protects the environment and public health. It is important for you to become familiar with the consent conditions, since failure to meet the conditions can result in adverse effects on the environment or public health, and may result in enforcement actions being taken by the council.

Consent transfer

If you are selling your property and have consent to discharge, you need to make arrangements to transfer the consent to the new owner. Resource consent transfer forms are available on the Auckland Council website aucklandcouncil.govt.nz. Until this transfer is completed, you will remain responsible for all requirements of the consent, including payment of any fees.

You need to complete and sign the form, and also ensure the new owners sign the form, before sending it to Auckland Council. You will be charged an administration fee for the transfer process. The council will transfer the consent to the new owner, who will then be responsible for all of the consent responsibilities, including fees and compliance costs.

Consent conditions

Authorised discharge quantity

Your wastewater discharge consent will include an authorised discharge quantity. This is the maximum volume of wastewater which may be discharged in one day. The discharge quantity is the basis of your wastewater treatment and disposal system's design. If you exceed the allowed discharge quantity, you can damage your treatment system, pollute the environment and/or create public health risks through the potential failure of all or part of your wastewater treatment or disposal system.

The authorised discharge quantity is measured in litres per day (litres/day) or m³/day (1m³ = 1000 litres).

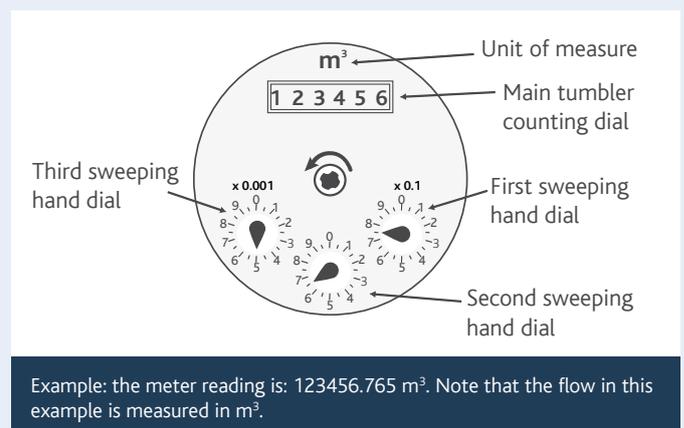
Self-monitoring

Wastewater consents commonly include conditions that require you to monitor treated wastewater discharge flows, and sometimes also the quality of the wastewater.

Wastewater flow meter recording

Your wastewater treatment system will be fitted with a flow meter which will measure the volume of wastewater that flows to the wastewater disposal field. Review your consent conditions to determine how frequently you are required to record the meter readings and send them to Auckland Council.

When taking a meter reading, you must record all the numbers in series, starting with the main number and followed by each small dial number in clockwise order. To determine the actual flow from your system, you must subtract consecutive meter readings from each other and divide by the number of days since the last reading to get flow/day. (See overleaf for an example of a simple flow record-keeping system).



Treated wastewater quality

You may also be required to get your treated wastewater tested by a laboratory to ensure it meets certain standards. The test results will indicate whether your wastewater treatment system is performing to the required standard. Common tests include:

- total suspended solids (mg/L)
- biochemical oxygen demand (mgO/L)
- faecal coliform (only when a disinfection system is installed).

During a scheduled service, your maintenance contractor can collect and arrange analysis of the samples for you at an accredited laboratory.

'One-off' information provision

Your consent will require certain information to be provided on a 'one-off' basis after the installation of your wastewater treatment and disposal system.

Example of a simple flow record-keeping system

Date	Meter reading (m ³)	Difference between last reading (m ³)	Days since last reading	Flow/day (m ³ /day)
1 January 2015	123456.765	Initial reading		
2 January 2015	123457.279	0.514	1	0.514
3 January 2015	123458.065	0.786	1	0.786
4 January 2015	123458.715	0.650	1	0.650
6 January 2015	123460.766	2.051	2	1.051

This information should be produced by your engineer or wastewater consultant and confirms that the system has been installed in accordance with the conditions of your consent. Typically the 'one-off' information required consists of:

- engineer's producer statement/certification (sometimes referred to as a PS4) to confirm the wastewater treatment and disposal systems have been installed in accordance with the plans submitted to the Auckland Council and with the conditions of your resource consent
- as-built plans: to show the position of components of the wastewater treatment and disposal systems as they have been installed
- maintenance contract: to confirm a formal maintenance agreement with the system supplier or other wastewater service provider is in place. Please note that a maintenance contract must be held for the duration of the consent
- management/operations plan: to provide information on the ongoing operation and maintenance requirements of the wastewater treatment and disposal system. It will also include information on how the system works, emergency contact numbers, day-to-day maintenance requirements, and flow record-keeping forms.

Compliance monitoring

Post-construction inspection

The post-construction inspection is the first compliance monitoring visit. Your consent will require you to contact Auckland Council to arrange for inspection within the first month of use to confirm the installed system is the same as that listed in the resource consent.

Please give all the required 'one-off' information to the Auckland Council compliance officer during this visit. The officer will inspect the treatment and disposal system and establish that it complies with your resource consent conditions.

Ongoing compliance monitoring and inspections

Auckland Council inspectors will visit your property periodically during the consent term to ensure compliance with consent conditions. They will also

review the monitoring results that you submit to Auckland Council. The frequency of site visits will be determined by factors such as the scale of your activity, potential for adverse effects on the environment and the compliance history. Compliance inspections for domestic wastewater discharges are generally carried out every five years following the initial post-construction inspection.

Compliance fees

Auckland Council charges consent holders directly for the cost of compliance monitoring. Costs include the compliance officer's travel time, time on site, review of management plans and monitoring data, and dealing with any subsequent issues associated with non-compliance. You can minimize compliance monitoring fees by keeping good records, submitting information as required by the resource consent (flow data, for example) and keeping the system well maintained and in good operating condition.

Expiry of resource consent

On-site wastewater consents for households are usually issued for a period of 10 to 15 years.

You will need to apply for a replacement consent before your current permit expires. This should be lodged at least six months before the expiry date of your existing consent to enable you to continue discharging wastewater while the consent is being renewed.

You are advised to engage a suitably qualified wastewater consultant or professional engineer to help prepare your renewal consent application and to review the performance and suitability of your existing wastewater treatment and disposal systems.

Lapsing date of resource consent

The lapsing date of your resource consent is specified on the permit. If you have not started the works the consent authorises, it usually lapses (i.e. expires) five years after being issued. If this happens, you need to apply for a new consent. You can apply to Auckland Council for an extension prior to the consent lapsing if necessary.

For more information

The information contained in this fact sheet is based on the Auckland Council Technical Publication 58 (TP58), in which there are detailed maintenance guidelines for wastewater systems (2004).

Auckland Council has a range of fact sheets about on-site wastewater management. Copies are available online at aucklandcouncil.govt.nz or upon request.

Topics include:

- Guidelines for 'one-off' consent requirements
- WW01 On-site wastewater management
- WW02 On-site wastewater management systems – septic tanks
- **WW03 Wastewater consent compliance, a guide for consent holders**
- WW04 On-site wastewater management, treatment and disposal systems maintenance and troubleshooting.

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