

Do's and Don'ts

- Conserve water
- Minimise detergent use, it blocks the drainage field (as do waste disposal systems)
- The tank should ideally be de-sludged when it is half full of sludge
- Approximately 1/6 of the sludge should be left in the tank as an anaerobic 'seed'
- Leave the 'crust' intact after de-sludging
- Don't flush sanitary items or nappies. Dispose of them in your household waste

Useful contacts

Environment Agency
08708 506506

Rother Amenities Division
01424 787532

Rother and Wealden Environmental
Health Service
01424 787550

East Sussex Building Control Partnership
01892 602005

Wealden District Council Waste
and Commercial Services
01323 443436

CS210

This information can be made
available in large print, braille,
audio/CD or in another
language upon request.

01424 787000
customerservices@rother.gov.uk

Rother and Wealden
Environmental Health Service
Rother District Council
Town Hall
Bexhill-on-Sea
East Sussex
TN39 3JX

Tel: 01424 787550
Fax: 01424 787547
email: envhealth@rother.gov.uk
pollution@rother.gov.uk
website: www.rother.gov.uk

Cesspools, septic tanks

and other small treatment plants



This leaflet has been written to help you understand private foul drainage systems. It provides basic information about how they work and sets out routine maintenance that each of the systems require. If you need further advice please contact this office directly on 01424 787550

Cesspools

A cesspool is a sealed underground tank where all the sewage from a property or properties is stored. There is no intent to treat or discharge the sewage and its function is simply to collect waste from the house. When the cesspool is full, which is likely to be every four to six weeks, it will need to be emptied. Due to the fact that cesspools have to contain all the waste from the house, the size of the cesspool can be considerable and the frequency of emptying is likely to prove expensive. Cesspools are typically only used where ground conditions are unsuitable or where the proximity of local watercourses prevent the use of alternative private systems. A consent will be required from the local authority before works commence.

Septic tanks

A septic tank system, will usually be built of brick or a modern plastic. These tanks have the advantage in that they settle and partially digest the settled sewage. However, the effluent from a correctly sized tank still

contains about 70% of the original polluting matter. This pollution can be further reduced by discharging the liquid into a sub-irrigation drainage system after the tank, which allows the ground to treat the sewage pollutants. The septic tank should be emptied at least annually. A consent from the local authority and the Environment Agency will be required for a new installation. If a septic tank and land drainage system are unable to treat the sewage, then one of the following sewage treatment systems must be used to remove a substantial amount of the pollution contained in the sewage, and protect our environment. For more information see the sub-irrigation section in this leaflet.



Other systems

Cesspools

Cesspools / Cesspits are covered watertight tanks that receive and store sewage. No treatment of the sewage occurs in the tank, and it will require frequent emptying.

Cesspool facts:

- They should be located no closer than 15 metres from your house
- The minimum capacity (from the building regulations) is 18 cubic metres or at least 45 days storage
- Rainwater should not be collected

Biodiscs

Biodiscs are tanks that contain a rotating biological filter to digest and settle sewage solids. They require a drainage field similar to septic tanks so consent will be required from the Environment Agency.

- Biodiscs may serve multiple properties and may be more appropriate than many septic tanks
- A constant supply of electricity is required to turn the biological filter
- Consent from the Environment Agency is required to discharge to a watercourse.