

# Effluent disposal and waste water treatment systems

## Information sheet



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### Effluent disposal systems / drainage and alteration work

Many of our buildings still discharge stormwater to soakage trenches or soak holes and particularly in the rural area effluent is disposed of on the property via a septic tank and effluent drainage field.

These ground based systems require regular inspection and maintenance to ensure they continue to operate effectively, particularly septic tanks and effluent drainage fields.

Older septic tanks should be checked at least annually to ensure sludge is not building up and effluent drainage fields should be maintained to ensure effluent is contained on your property and does not pose a hazard to people or animals.

When doing alteration work to an existing dwelling by adding additional habitable spaces and bedrooms, consideration must be given to the size and capacity of the existing effluent disposal system and septic tank. Upgrading may be required along with approval from Environment Canterbury (ECan).

All new and upgraded effluent disposal systems are required to be a specific design by a suitably qualified consultant with full plans and specifications to be submitted with your building consent application.

Regional Council Approval – any new and upgraded systems that are not a permitted activity (see IS-128) require approval from Environmental Canterbury which a Resource Consent will be required. It is advisable to obtain ECan approval prior to submitting your application to Council for consent.

ECan permitted activities for waste water and stormwater can be found here:

<https://eplan.ecan.govt.nz/eplan/#Rules/0/50/1/23506>  
<https://eplan.ecan.govt.nz/eplan/#Rules/0/50/1/23508>

Building over existing drainage work may be another consideration when doing alteration work. An as-built drainage plan may be available when a PIM is requested to enable location of drains. Professional advice should be obtained if building over existing drainage.

All new and upgraded effluent disposal systems are required to be a specific design by a suitably qualified consultant with full plans and specifications to be submitted with your building consent application.

### Waste water treatment systems

Council require additional information when applicants are submitting building consent applications which include waste water treatment systems that are a “Permitted Activity”. The following information is required to be provided to the Council:

1. A Producer Statement PS1 (design), from a suitably qualified person, is to accompany the design of the proposed system. The Producer Statement must include all of the usual details such as site address, legal description, the building code clauses that are being complied with, and a reference to any attached design documentation.

2. In addition to the above, the Producer Statement must state that the proposed design is in accordance with the “Permitted Activity” (ECan rules). This must include the ECan 15 point checklist indicating how the design meets the permitted activity rules. However, if the design is not in accordance with the “Permitted Activity” rules, the design will require an approval from ECan (a Resource consent).

Most designers of these Treatment Systems are deemed suitably qualified because they hold a relevant qualification as, for example, a Chartered Professional Engineer (CPEng). However, if you are a designer of a system/s, you are still required to contact the Building Unit in order to apply for registration with their Producer Statement Register.

## Glossary of terms

Description	Term
Ministry of Building, Innovation and Employment	MBIE
Land Information Memorandum	LIM
Project Information Memorandum	PIM
Licensed Building Practitioner	LBP
Building Research Association of New Zealand	BRANZ
Environment Canterbury	ECan
New Zealand Building Code	NZBC
Restricted Building Work	RBW

## Other information sheets available

Description	Code
Fees and charges	IS-101
Change of use	IS-105
Demolition	IS-106
Effluent disposal and waste water treatment systems	IS-107
Relocating a dwelling / building	IS-109
Transportable buildings	IS-110
Domestic smoke alarm systems for dwellings	IS-111
Accessible facilities	IS-115
Amusement devices and marquees	IS-116
Essential features of a producer statement	IS-122
Exempt building work	IS-123
Building consent conditions	IS-129