

WORKING TOWARDS SAFE & RESPONSIBLE ON-SITE SEWAGE MANAGEMENT
ON-SITE SEWAGE MANAGEMENT EDUCATION SERIES

ARE YOU
FAMILIAR WITH
THESE OSMS
TERMS?

COMMON TERMS ASSOCIATED WITH ON-SITE
SEWAGE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Absorption Trench - A designated area where effluent is released into the soil. Soil processes, natural organisms and plants in the area further purify the effluent before it enters the wider environment.

Aerated Wastewater Treatment System (AWTS) – An OSMS that treats wastewater to a Secondary standard so that the effluent can be used for irrigation on your property (refer to factsheet 3).

Blackwater – Wastewater from toilets. Wastewater from your kitchen sink is also treated as blackwater in OSMS, because it can be highly contaminated with food particles, cooking oil and grease.

Disinfection – The treatment of wastewater to destroy or reduce pathogens to an acceptable level.

Disposal Area - An area where treated effluent is deposited to after-treatment in an OSMS. Disposal areas include a septic tanks absorption trench and an AWTS irrigation area.

Effluent - Wastewater that has been treated in and discharged from an OSMS or sewage treatment plant.

Greywater - Household water from baths, showers, hand basins and washing machines that does not include toilet discharge.

Irrigation Area – A designated area where effluent is irrigated, using drip irrigation or sprinklers that produce coarse droplets, following treatment in an AWTS.

Primary treatment system - The separation of suspended material from wastewater in septic tanks, primary settling chambers, or other structures, before effluent discharge to either a secondary treatment process, or to a disposal area (refer to factsheet 2).

Secondary treatment system - Aerobic biological processing and settling or filtering of effluent received from a primary treatment unit followed by disinfection (usually by chlorine) before discharge to a disposal area (refer to factsheet 3).

Septic Tank – An OSMS that treats a household’s wastewater to a Primary level (refer to factsheet 2).

Sewage – Untreated (raw) wastewater from households or commercial premises that is discharged to a reticulated sewer system where available, or treated and disposed of on-site in OSMS.

Transpiration – The process where plants absorb water through the roots and then give off water vapour through pores in their leaves.

Wastewater - Used water that goes down sinks, toilets and drains and flows into your OSMS.



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