

Have your say on the Draft On-site Effluent Treatment Plan Change



On-site effluent treatment (OSET) systems are for treating human wastewater on a property.

These include septic tanks and aerated wastewater treatment systems (AWTS), composting toilets, greywater use, long drops, and alternative technologies such as incinerating toilets.

Under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) the Bay of Plenty Regional Council is responsible for the management of discharges from OSET systems to ensure discharges do not contaminate the environment.

We have an OSET Regional Plan to help us manage these discharges but it is more than 10 years old and needs updating. The OSET Draft Plan Change 14 is to replace the current plan, and include the updated rules into the Regional Natural Resources Plan.

On-site Effluent Treatment Draft Plan Change 14 does not apply to dairy shed effluent or municipal sewerage discharges. There are separate rules in the Regional Natural Resources Plan for these.

We are seeking feedback on the Draft Plan Change from 24 July to 26 October 2018 and anyone can give feedback.

For more information and links to key documents visit www.boprc.govt.nz/osetplanchange

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Regulations for on-site systems

Under the RMA, any discharge needs resource consent unless there is a permitted activity rule in a regional plan. Discharges of domestic wastewater contain nutrients and bacteria that are a risk to the environment and human health.

A key goal of the OSET Draft Plan Change 14 is to make sure discharges of domestic wastewater are contained in the soil layer, and wastewater does not enter surface waters or groundwater. To achieve this goal, on-site effluent treatment systems must:

- Be designed for the factors at the site (e.g. soil type, distance to water, depth to groundwater).
- Meet relevant New Zealand standards.
- Be maintained so they continue to work well.

OSET Draft Plan Change 14 facts

Septic tanks and aerated wastewater systems (AWTS)

- Discharges from domestic wastewater from households, lunch rooms and ablution facilities, and work camps are permitted. Discharges from other sources need consent.
- A discharge of more than 2m³ per day needs consent.
- Existing septic tanks that meet minimum tank size and land application trench length are permitted. The tank size and trench length relate to the number of bedrooms in the house.
- New OSET systems on lots less than 1200m² require resource consent. It is difficult to fit a sustainable OSET system on smaller sites.
- New septic tanks are to be a minimum of 4500 litres. A larger tank size provides for peak loads (e.g. when friends and family are staying), and greater treatment capacity to extend the life of the disposal field.

- New provisions to protect community drinking water supply bores and springs. This is to manage the risk of contamination, and avoid the water supply contamination that occurred in Havelock North.
- New systems must be designed to account for climate change (sea level rise, coastal erosion, changes to rainfall and flood frequencies, and groundwater levels).
- There must be no discharge to water, or contamination of groundwater.
- On-site systems must be maintained properly.

Soak Holes

- New soak holes are prohibited.
- Existing soak holes are prohibited:
 - Throughout all Rotorua Lakes catchments.
 - In Maintenance Zones.
 - Where there is less than two metres depth to groundwater.
 - In the Minden Stability Areas in the Western Bay of Plenty.
- In these areas, soak holes must be replaced with a trench system.
- Existing soak holes in other areas are permitted providing these meet the required conditions.

Long drops

- Pit latrines (long drops) are only for low or intermittent use such as trampers' huts and remote camp sites. These are not acceptable in other situations, including commercial orchards.

Composting toilets

Composting toilets are permitted where:

- The property size is more than 2 hectares (and not within an urban area).
- The composting toilet meets New Zealand Standards.
- Where urine and leachate is diverted from the toilet, there is no discharge to land or water. Urine and leachate must be evaporated, collected for disposal at a municipal sewage plant, or there is an appropriate treatment and disposal system in place.
- Solids are composted for more than 12 months before use.
- Composted material is not used on vegetable crops, and must be kept away from water.

Greywater

- Outdoor showers, temporary use of laundries and bath or shower water during droughts is permitted in all locations.
- Up to 1,000 litres per day of laundry and bath or shower water can be discharged on properties outside urban areas.

- Greywater can't be used on vegetable crops, and must be kept away from water.
- A discharge of kitchen greywater requires resource consent. The fats and food wastes in kitchen greywater must be treated before discharged.

Alternative toilets

- Alternative toilets include incinerating toilets, and are permitted in rural areas where:
- An approved toilet system is used.
- Material is not used on vegetable crops, and must be kept away from water.
- Where urine is diverted from the toilet, there is no discharge to land or water. Urine must be evaporated, or collected for disposal at a municipal sewage plant.

Maintenance Zones

A Maintenance Zone is community where problems with on-site treatment systems are evident. A maintenance schedule is applied to manage risks and prevent system failures.

Maintenance Zones in OSET Draft Plan Change 14

Current Maintenance Zones

- Tanners Point, Tauranga Harbour
- Ongare Point, Tauranga Harbour
- Bryans Beach, Ohiwa
- Lake Rotoiti – Gisborne Point, Hinehopu
- Lake Rotomā – settlement area along SH30
- Lake Tarawera – settlement area
- Mamaku township

New Maintenance Zones

- Matatā
- Tara Road, Papamoa

Rotorua Lakes

New regulations in the draft Plan Change are specific to each lake catchment (or group of similar lakes). The regulations state what types of on-site systems are appropriate in the catchment. Generally, new systems need to be AWTS+NR (nutrient reduction systems). Depending on the catchment, other systems may need a consent.