

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.

Lake Tarawera

Sewage reticulation is currently being planned for Lake Tarawera but the area will remain a Maintenance Zone until it happens.

Maintenance Zone requirements

- Septic tanks must be pumped out every three years. If the tank size is a good size, the pump out frequency can be reduced to four, five or six yearly.
- An outlet filter must be installed.
- Soak holes must be replaced by a trench system.



Aerated wastewater treatment systems must also be maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

What are the costs?

A septic tank pump-out costs around \$450-500.

Changes to types of on-site systems

The draft plan change contains new regulations about the types of on-site systems suitable for Lake Tarawera. These new regulations will apply prior to reticulation and include:

- The requirement to upgrade an existing system to an Aerated Wastewater Treatment Systems with nutrient reduction (AWTS + NR) within 200 metres of the lake shore being removed.
- New and existing soak holes prohibited. Soak holes must be replaced with a trench system.
- Property owners still need to comply with any current resource consent that applies to your property.

Septic tanks and AWTS

- Existing AWTS + NR or AWTS (without NR) and septic tanks are permitted if environmental and human health requirements are met as well as the Maintenance Zone requirements.

- New AWTS+NR are permitted, if these meet the 15gm N/m³ limit.
- New AWTS (without NR) and septic tanks require consent.

Existing houses that are expanded, altered or reconstructed

- The existing OSET system must be assessed by a technical expert to check if it has the necessary capacity. If the existing system meets the necessary capacity, and meets the environmental and human health conditions in the permitted rules, it will be a permitted activity.
- If the existing system does not meet the requirements, it may be upgraded or replaced to comply with the permitted activity rules. If permitted activity conditions can't be met, resource consent will be needed.

Resource consents

- Council can't issue resource consent for an OSET system if the environmental effects of that system are not mitigated.
- If an application for an OSET system doesn't meet the minimum standards, it will be declined.
- Due to steep sites and poor soils about half of all properties will find it difficult or impossible to install a good septic tank or aerated wastewater treatment system.

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