



Environment  
Agency

# a guide to managing your waste water in Doncaster



We are the Environment Agency. It's our job to look after your environment and make it a better place – for you, and for future generations.

Your environment is the air you breathe, the water you drink and the ground you walk on. Working with business, Government and society as a whole, we are making your environment cleaner and healthier.

The Environment Agency. Out there, making your environment a better place.

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# Options

When there is no foul sewer available there are three main sewage disposal options.

These are:

## • Package sewage treatment plants

All package treatment plants need a power supply and routine maintenance to operate efficiently.

There are several different types of package sewage treatment plants available but they all provide a biological zone. This is where the sewage is broken down by micro-organisms. The treated waste water may then be discharged to watercourse or soakaway. This requires the permission of the Environment Agency. Permission will only be given if the watercourse or ground conditions are suitable to receive the discharge without harming the environment. For instance the watercourse must have enough flow to sufficiently dilute the waste water or the soils the capacity for it to soak away.



*An ecological filter*

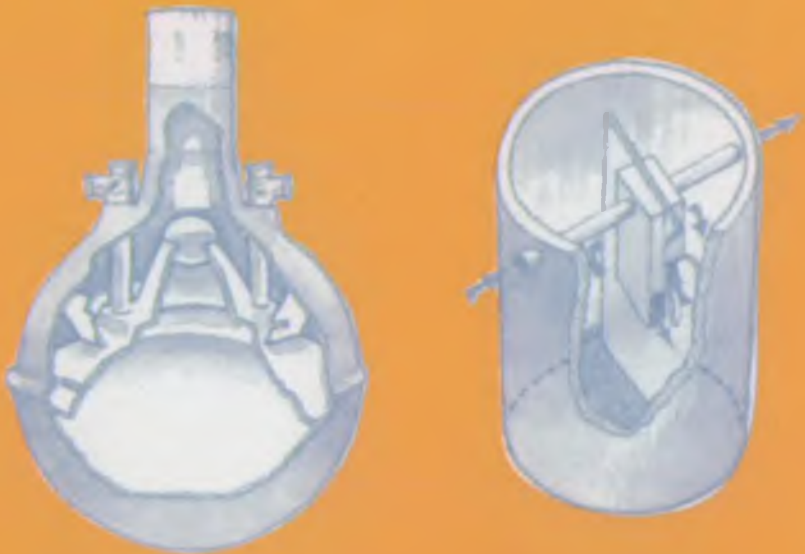


*A biological treatment plant*

## • Septic tanks

Septic tanks provide a storage facility which allows solids to separate from the liquid and partial decomposition of the solids. The wastewater is not suitable to discharge into watercourse and requires further treatment from a soak away or drainage mound. The soakaway must be a sized to accommodate the daily volume that will be discharged. Also, the ground for the soakaway needs to have the right conditions to treat the waste and allow it to soak away. Approval from the Environment Agency is also needed.

Septic tanks will only operate properly if they are maintained and emptied regularly.

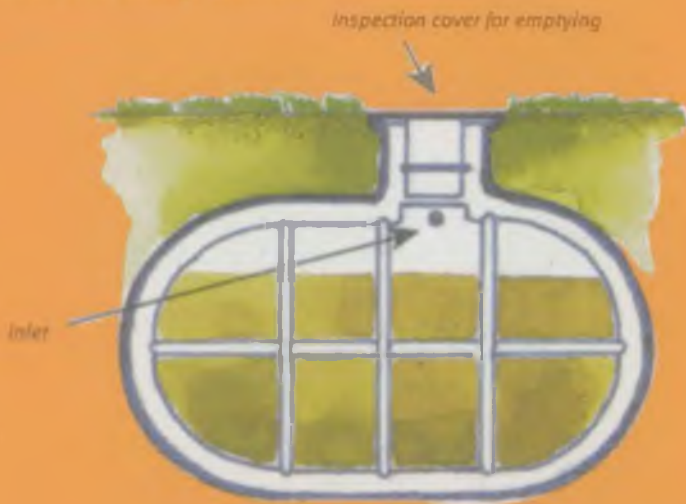


*Septic tanks may be constructed of glass fibre, thermoplastics or precast concrete*



## • Cesspools

A cesspool is a watertight tank, installed underground, for the storage of sewage. They do not treat the sewage - everything that enters it must be tankered away. They need emptying on average once a month. If your cesspool rarely or never needs emptying, there may be a leak in the tank or pipe work that needs to be investigated and repaired. Cesspools must only be emptied by a licensed waste carrier and taken for proper treatment at a sewage works.



*Side view of a prefabricated cesspool*

Cesspools present a considerable risk of pollution due to leaking or poor maintenance. An average household of three people will produce 9,000 litres of sewage in two to three weeks, the capacity of a typical emptying tanker. Due to these high operating costs and the large number of tanker journeys, the Environment Agency does not consider them a viable long-term sewage option.

# Legal requirements

We are working together to investigate reports and complaints and will be taking the necessary enforcement action to stop polluters.

We are also able to provide advice and guidance to anyone with problems regarding the disposal of sewage.

It is an offence for a cesspool to be in a condition that is harmful to public health or a nuisance. It is also an offence for anyone to discharge any cesspool or septic tank contents into watercourses or surface water drains which may cause a nuisance or pollute controlled waters.

## Contact us

### Environment Agency

General enquiries: 08708 506 506 (Mon-Fri 8-6)

Incident hotline: 0800 80 70 60 ( 24 hour)

<http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk>

### Doncaster Metropolitan Council

Environmental Health, Tel: 01302 737 573

[nuisance.team@doncaster.gov.uk](mailto:nuisance.team@doncaster.gov.uk)

### Other sources of information

The Building Regulations 200, Drainage and Waste Disposal - Approved Document H 2002 Edition. ISBN 0117536075.

Available from The Stationary Office,  
[www.tsoshop.co.uk](http://www.tsoshop.co.uk), Tel:0870 6005522

Construction Industry Research and Information Association Guidance on Septic tank systems, [www.ciriabooks.com](http://www.ciriabooks.com)

# North Doncaster

The geography of an area can make the disposal of sewage waste more difficult. In flat low lying areas like the area between the A19 and M18 north of Doncaster most of the watercourses act as drains. These are managed by the internal drainage boards and have to be pumped to the rivers Don or Went. This means they have very weak flows and any sewage discharged will not be washed away quickly but will cause a persistent local nuisance. This also means many of the watercourses in the area are not suitable to receive discharges from package sewage treatment plants.

The Environment Agency and Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council receive many complaints each year about the pollution and nuisances caused by poorly managed domestic sewage systems and we are working together to tackle this in the North Doncaster area.

## Dealing with sewage

Discharges of domestic sewage are a recurring problem in areas which don't have connection to mains sewer. They usually occur because of a lack of maintenance, deliberate discharges - by pump or overflow - or poor installation.

If untreated or poorly treated sewage enters surface water it will cause pollution.

This may result in:

- odour nuisances
- more vermin
- a risk to public health
- damage to habitats and wildlife
- reduction in the amenity value of the area



**Would you like to find out more about us,  
or about your environment?**

**Then call us on**

**08708 506 506** (Mon-Fri 8-6)

**email**

**enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk**

**or visit our website**

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**incident hotline 0800 80 70 60** (24hrs)

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