

# Home Owners Guide to Pressure Sewer Systems



## The alarm goes off when it rains

This means that rainwater may be getting into your system and overloading it. Call Council to check whether rainwater is entering the system via defective or inappropriate plumbing. If this is the case, it is the property owner's responsibility to fund repair costs.

## The neighbours are away and their system's alarm is sounding

Call Council to investigate and take appropriate action.

## The power supply has been interrupted

In this instance, the alarm may keep sounding until the unit clears itself. Press the 'silence' button to mute the alarm until the unit clears itself. If the alarm stays on for more than 60 minutes after the power has been restored, call the council or follow the steps under 'Helpful tips'.

## The alarm goes off after backwashing my pool

Backwashing a pool or spa may cause the alarm to activate and remain activated until a quantity of water is cleared through the system. Press the 'silence' button to mute the alarm until the unit clears itself. If the alarm stays on for more than 60 minutes, call Council.

All Sewer System equipment provided are backed by Enviroment Once Corporation (E/One) and carries certification through ISO19001:2008

Disclaimer: This information was correct at the time of printing and is subject to change

# Pressure Sewer Quick Reference Guide

Your property has been equipped with a pressure sewer system. This replaces a septic system and was chosen as a practical and affordable alternative to a conventional gravity sewer.

The ownership and maintenance responsibilities for these pressure sewer systems vary depending on the development conditions that existed at the time each system was installed. If you are unsure of your responsibilities, please contact Griffith City Council for clarification.

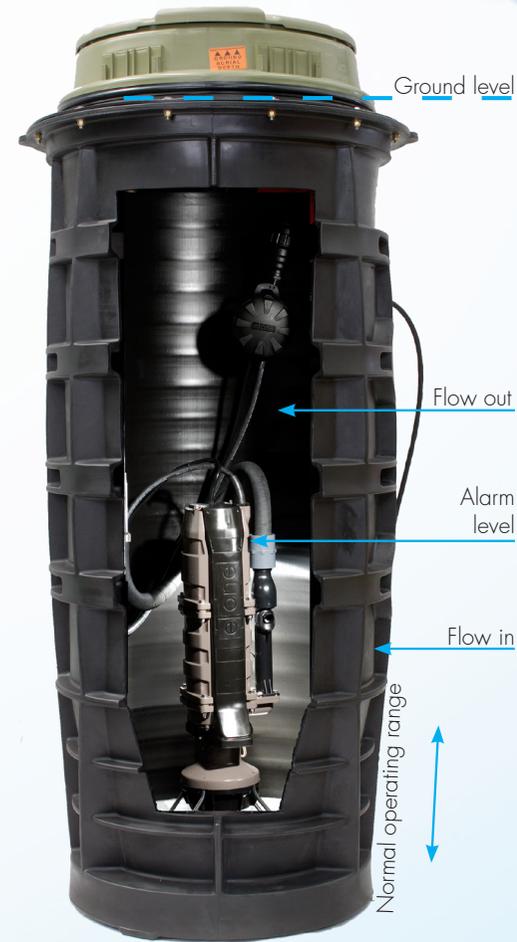
The system consists of a below-ground collection chamber/pump unit which stores, grinds and pumps sewage under pressure into council's sewer. This sewage comes from your toilet, sink, shower, bath, dishwasher and washing machine, and is pumped to a sewage treatment plant in your region.

Under normal running conditions your tank stores a maximum of 112 litres and it is then pumped down to 80 litres. In case of a fault and depending on your water usage the tank has a storage capacity of about 24 hours of usage.

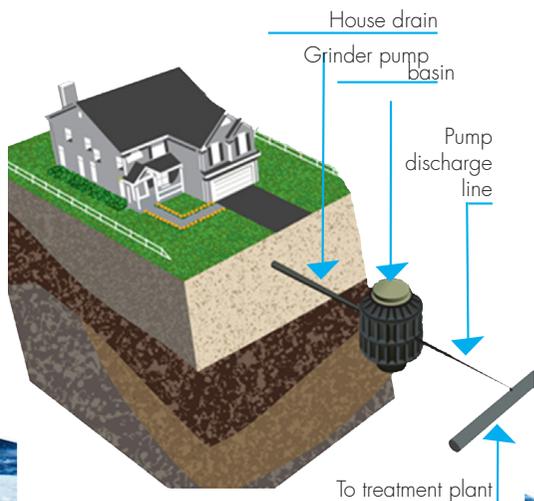
The unit is wired to your household's electricity supply and typical costs are minimal. It is operated by a control panel that features audible and visible alarms, which are activated if there are any issues with the system.

Wet wipes is a major problem for the system as they are responsible for 80% of all sewer blockages. It can cost thousands of dollars to repair and if they occur in people's private plumbing the cost may be incurred by the customer.

While the unit is robust and reliable and there is very little that can go wrong, this brochure spells out some handy tips for operating your pressure sewer system.



The pump unit stores, grinds and pumps sewage from your house to the sewer network.



## Your responsibilities

- Respond promptly to any alarms (see 'What to do if the alarm is triggered' section for full instructions).
- Consult with Council when proposing to carry out any works within your property.
- Take care when digging near the unit or the discharge pipe. If you accidentally break a pipeline, call Griffith City Council. The property owner is responsible for the cost of these repairs. For safety reasons, do not attempt to repair the break yourself.
- Maintain clear access to the collection chamber/unit at all times by keeping the area free of plant growth, debris or other obstacles.
- Flush the system if no one will be at the property for more than a month. Do this prior to leaving to prevent odours building up in the pressure sewer system. To flush the system, run water down your sink for a couple of minutes.

## Caring for your system

**To avoid blockages and damage to the pump unit, DO NOT put the following items into the system:**

- wipes of any description, repairs cost may be incurred by the customer
- sanitary napkins, tampons or contraceptive devices
- nappies
- cotton buds
- coffee grinds
- seafood shells
- kitty litter
- plastic, glass or metal
- gravel or sand
- rags or cloths
- explosive or flammable material
- fats, oils or grease
- chemicals and pesticides
- solvents, paint or turpentine
- petrol or diesel
- storm-water runoff

**To protect the pressure sewer system from damage, DO NOT:**

- cover the lid on the collection chamber/pump unit;
- walk on the lid of the collection chamber/pump unit or put heavy objects on the lid;
- interfere with any valves or switches;
- turn off the power to the pump (unless in response to a broken discharge pipe); or
- obstruct the vent on the pump unit if fitted.

## Helpful tips: What to do if the alarm is triggered

If the alarm on your pressure sewer system goes off, do not attempt to repair the unit yourself.

In the case of a power outage, the grinder pump will automatically clear itself within an hour upon restarting. If the alarm is not due to a power outage, follow the steps below:

1. **Press the button**  
The audible alarm will switch off when you press the 'silence' button underneath the alarm panel. The alarm light will continue to be visible.
2. **Wait one hour**  
After this time, check to see if the alarm light is still on. If the light is off, no further action is required. If the light is still on, go to step 3.
3. **Call Griffith City Council** For technical information please refer to your home owners guide or phone Griffith City Council on 6962 8100 from 8.30am - 5.00pm or 6964 0886 outside business hours.  
**Limit your sewage generation**
4. Until repairs are carried out, limit the amount of sewage going into the system. You can do this by:
  - only use water for vital activities such as toilet flushing or short showers;
  - not using dishwashers or washing machines; and
  - not leaving taps running.

## Troubleshooting tips

### A pipe is broken

If a break occurs in the sewer discharge pipe, turn off the power to the pump and call the council immediately. Minimize sewage from your household until the break is repaired.

If the break is in your water supply, turn off your water supply and contact the council to arrange repair. The property owner is responsible for leaks on the property side of the water meter.

### The unit is emitting strong odours

When operating normally, there should be no strong odours coming from the pressure sewer system. If you can smell odours coming from the unit, run water down the sink for a few minutes to flush the unit. It is also recommended you do this if you are going on holidays or staying away from your property more than one month. If the odour persists, call Council.

### There are wet patches around the plumping unit or discharge pipe

Wet spots should not occur as the pumping unit and discharge pipe are totally sealed. If you notice any wet patches around the pumping unit or discharge pipe, and there has not been any recent rainfall, call the Council.

### For Technical Information

Please phone Griffith City Council on: 6962 8100 Monday - Friday 8:30am - 5:00pm or 6964 0886  
Outside Business Hours