

## Decommissioning of septic tanks

Under the *Health (Treatment of Sewage and Disposal of Effluent and Liquid Waste) Regulations 1974*, where a property has already been connected to the sewer the owner must decommission any disused septic tank or effluent disposal system at the following times:-

1. If there is a change of use to the premises, decommissioning must occur **not more than 60 days** after the day on which the change in use occurred (eg Residential to Child Care Centre).
2. Decommissioning must occur **not more than 60 days** after ownership of the property has changed. ie. New owner responsible for decommissioning, not the person/s who originally connected to the sewer.
3. If foundations for a building on the premises are to be built closer than 1.2 metres from the apparatus or a building is to be constructed above the apparatus, **decommissioning must occur before** building works commence.

### Procedure for Decommissioning

4. Septic tanks, leach drains or soakwells must be completely emptied by a Liquid Waste Contractor licensed by the City of Mandurah.
5. After emptying, septic tanks, leach drains and soakwells must be completely removed from the site.
6. The excavations must be filled with clean fill eg. yellow sand and then thoroughly compacted.

**OR** If it is **not practicable** to remove septic tanks, leach drains or soakwells (eg. if access is not available for machinery):-

7. All septic tanks, leach drains and soakwells must be completely emptied by a Liquid Waste Contractor licensed by the City of Mandurah.
8. The lids must be removed and the bottom of septic tanks broken up.
9. The tanks, leach drains and soakwells must be backfilled with clean fill eg. yellow sand and then thoroughly compacted.

Please note that once a Licensed Liquid Waste Contractor has been employed to empty out your septic tanks, a copy of the receipt must be forwarded to the City's Environmental Health Services section so as a record of the decommissioning can be placed on your property file.

If a property is to be sold, the cost associated with decommissioning can exceed \$1,000, therefore it is necessary to obtain some assurances that decommissioning has already occurred. If decommissioning has not occurred, such costs may be taken into consideration by purchasers at the time of offer and acceptance, as legislation states that it is the "new property owner" who must carry out the required decommissioning within sixty (60) days of a change of property ownership.

Further information about the decommissioning of septic tank systems can be obtained by contacting the Environmental Health Services section on 9550 3746 or by phoning the Wastewater Management Section of the Department of Health on 9388 4999.