

# Wastewater consent compliance – a guide for consent holders

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## ■ Introduction

This fact sheet provides information for resource consent holders about wastewater discharge consents and consent compliance.

## ■ On-site wastewater discharge consents

Your resource consent authorises the discharge of treated wastewater onto land. It is an important legal document granted under the provisions of the Resource Management Act (1991) (RMA 1991) so you are advised to make yourself familiar with the consent conditions.

## ■ Consent conditions

All resource consents are granted with conditions. Conditions for your wastewater consent are set out to ensure wastewater is treated and disposed of in a way that least affects the receiving environment while also minimising the public health risk.

## ■ Consent transfer

If you are selling your property and have consent to discharge, you will need to arrange to transfer the consent to the new owner. Resource consent transfer forms are available on the ARC website [www.arc.govt.nz](http://www.arc.govt.nz).

Complete the form and get the new owners to sign it before sending it back to the ARC. You will be charged an administration fee. The ARC will transfer the consent to the new owner, who will then be responsible for all of the consent responsibilities, including fees and compliance costs.

## ■ Consent conditions

### **Authorised discharge quantity**

Your wastewater discharge consent will include an authorised discharge quantity. This is the maximum volume of wastewater which may be discharged in one day. The discharge quantity is the basis of your wastewater treatment and disposal systems design. Exceeding the discharge quantity can pollute the environment and/or create public health risks by the failure of all or part of your wastewater treatment or disposal system. The authorised discharge quantity is measured in litres per day (litres/day) or m<sup>3</sup>/day (i.e. 1 m<sup>3</sup> = 1000 litres).

### Self monitoring

Wastewater consents commonly include conditions that require you to monitor treated wastewater discharge quality or wastewater production over time.

### Wastewater flow meter recording

Your wastewater treatment system will be fitted with a wastewater flow meter which will record the volume of wastewater that flows to the wastewater disposal field. Your consent conditions may require you to read this meter at specified intervals to determine whether the amount of wastewater discharged is within the limits specified in the consent and for which the treatment and disposal systems have been designed. When taking a meter reading you must read the numbers in series, starting with the main number and followed by each dial in the following order:  $\times 0.1 \rightarrow \times 0.001 \rightarrow 0.0001$



The meter reading in the above picture is therefore:  
193.9037

### Treated wastewater quality

You may be required to have treated wastewater tested by a laboratory for certain parameters. The test results will indicate whether your wastewater treatment system is performing to the required standard. Common tests include:

- Total suspended solids (TSS) (mg/L)
- Biochemical oxygen demand ( $BOD_5$ ) (mgO/L)
- Total nitrogen (TN) (mgN/L)
- Ammoniacal nitrogen ( $NH_3-N$ ) (mg/L)

You or your maintenance contractor will need to take a sample of treated wastewater and take it to the nearest laboratory for testing. To get an accurate measurement you should take several litres of treated wastewater in sterile glass or plastic bottles. Samples should be chilled, kept out of the sunlight and delivered to the laboratory immediately.

### 'One Off' information provision

Your consent will require certain information to be provided on a 'one-off' basis after the installation of your wastewater treatment and disposal system. This information should be produced by your engineer or wastewater consultant and has the function of confirming that the system has been installed in accordance with conditions of your consent. The information required consists of:

- Engineer's producer statement/certification (PS): This confirms that the wastewater treatment and disposal systems have been installed in accordance with the plans submitted to the ARC and with conditions of your wastewater discharge resource consent
- As-built plan. Indicates the position of components of the wastewater treatment and disposal systems as they have been installed
- Maintenance contract: A formal maintenance agreement with the system supplier or other wastewater service provider that allows for the six-monthly maintenance servicing of the wastewater system. A current maintenance contract must be held for the duration of the consent

- Management plan: Contains guidelines for the on-going operation of the wastewater treatment and disposal system and should be provided by your engineer or system supplier. It will also include information on how the system works, emergency contact numbers, day-to-day maintenance requirements, flow monitoring forms and a copy of the consent document

## ■ Compliance monitoring

### Post-construction inspection

The post-construction inspection is the first compliance monitoring visit. Your consent will require you to contact the ARC to arrange for inspection within the first month of discharging.

Give all the required 'one-off' information to the ARC compliance officer during this visit. The officer will inspect the treatment and disposal system and establish that it complies with your resource consent conditions.

## ■ On-going compliance inspections

The ARC will visit your property at regular intervals during the consent period to ensure the wastewater discharge continues to comply with consent conditions. The frequency of the visits will be determined by factors such as the scale of your activity and the potential for adverse effects to the receiving environment. Compliance inspections for domestic wastewater discharges are generally carried out every three to five years.

## ■ Compliance fees

The ARC charges consent holders directly for the cost of compliance monitoring inspection. Costs include the compliance officer's time and travel time, and may also include time for the review of management plans, monitoring data and dealing with any subsequent issues of non-compliance.



## ■ Expiry of resource consent

On-site wastewater consents for households are usually issued for a period of 10 to 15 years. You will need to apply for a replacement consent before your current permit expires. This should be lodged at least six months before the expiry date of your existing consent to enable you to continue discharging wastewater in accordance with your consent.

You are advised to engage a suitably qualified wastewater consultant or professional engineer to help prepare your consent application and to review the performance and suitability of your existing wastewater treatment and disposal systems.

## ■ Lapsing date of resource consent

The lapsing date of your resource consent is specified on the permit. It usually lapses five years after being issued if you have not started the works it authorises. You can apply to the ARC for an extension prior to consent lapsing.

## ■ For more information

The ARC has a range of fact sheets about on-site wastewater management. Copies are available online at [www.arc.govt.nz](http://www.arc.govt.nz) or upon request. Topics include:

- Septic tanks
- Post construction requirements
- Treatment and Disposal Systems – Maintenance and Trouble Shooting
- A Guide for Homeowners

### How do I contact the ARC?

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