

## Septic Tanks and Effluent Fields

Historically Council have inspected septic systems to the tank only. The issue with this is that if the associated effluent field fails the building becomes insanitary. For this reason Council are now inspecting both the tank and effluent bed. Building consents with an included septic system will have an additional inspection included to enable inspectors to view the tank and drainage field before the latter is covered up. When booking your inspections ensure that both the tank and drainage field are ready for inspection or the inspector will fail the drainage inspection. Note there are separate inspections required – one for tank and one for the field.

### Why are Council concerned about effluent fields?

In the past septic systems consisted of a concrete insitu tank draining off to a boulder hole (or being pumped out). Where systems started failing, e.g. Prebbleton, Council were prompted to install a reticulated sewer system.

There are still many areas in Selwyn operating off stand alone septic systems. Newer septic tank systems work on the basis of good bacteria decomposing the blackwater, with 'nearly safe' treated water released out onto the surrounding soil via a drainage field. A failure in the septic system causes sanitary issues, and where the drainage field is affected can require a new drainage field to be installed on a fresh piece of land, which can be challenging where sites are small (e.g. Darfield township).

### What will Inspectors be looking at?

Inspectors will look at the whole septic system – tank and drainage field. They will be seeking to confirm that the consented specific engineered design (SED) has been followed, and that there is an overflow relief gully (ORG) installed.

The inspection will check the pipework to the tank, soil load on the lid, the depth the tank is buried at is as per recommendations from the manufacturer, and that 2A filter sand has been used in the drainage field. The location and boundaries of drip lines will be verified and checked.

For above ground systems installed in locations with a high water table (e.g. Greenpark), inspectors will check evaporation systems and the planting plan.

Where discharge field sizing, location and quality of materials checked are not as per SED, the inspector will fail the inspection. Inspectors will also be checking that plumbers and drainlayers are licensed and current to carry out restricted work. The CCC will not be issued if they are found to be lapsed.