

Circular to Councils

Subject/title	Onsite Wastewater Management Guidelines
Circular Details	25-05 / 9 April 2025 / A949851
Previous Circular	23-07 Draft update of the Environment and Health Protection Guidelines: Onsite Sewage Management for Single Households (Silver Book)
Who should read this	General Managers / Environmental Health Officers / Council Water Utilities
Contact	Policy Team / (02) 4428 4100 / olg@olg.nsw.gov.au
Action required	Information / Council to implement

What's new or changing?

The Onsite Wastewater Management Guidelines (the Guidelines - previously known as the Environment & Health Protection Guidelines: On-site Sewage Management for Single Households or Silver Book) have been updated.

The updated Guidelines follow extensive sector consultation and constitute a technical update to capture technological advancements, the latest scientific literature and emerging trends in land use.

What will this mean for council?

- Councils regulate the installation and operation of onsite wastewater management (OWM) systems and rely heavily on the resources provided in the Guidelines.
- The updated Guidelines will provide councils with increased confidence that their approval processes achieve desired public health and environmental outcomes.

Key points

- The Guidelines remain the primary reference document for OWM in NSW. They are also referenced by other industry participants, including wastewater consultants, environmental engineers, suppliers, installers and service technicians.

- Feedback on the update was obtained through a survey carried out in late June 2022 and a consultation draft in 2023. This information and feedback helped shape the development of this update.
- The revised Guidelines were developed under the direction of the Office of Local Government (OLG), NSW Health, the Department of Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water (Town Water Risk Reduction Program) and WaterNSW.
- The update includes a new model OWM strategy that councils may wish to refer to and/or adapt when next reviewing their strategies. It is based on a desktop review of several councils' current strategies to come up with a best practice approach.
- The regular review and updating of OWM strategies is encouraged to ensure they remain relevant and useful tools for operational management of new and existing OWM systems.

Where to go for further information

- A copy of the updated Onsite Wastewater Management Guidelines is available on the OLG website at <https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/councils/policy-and-legislation/guidelines-and-policy-information-resources-for-councils/guidelines-codes-and-practice-notes/>.
- For further information, contact OLG's Policy Team on (02) 4428 4100 or by emailing olg@olg.nsw.gov.au.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brett Whitworth".

Brett Whitworth
Deputy Secretary
Office of Local Government
8 April 2025