

Retaining Shacks commitment

Complying with contemporary standards: Wastewater systems for shacks on Crown land and in national parks



As part of the South Australian Government's Retaining Shacks commitment, lessees of shacks on Crown land or in national parks must provide evidence that their shack complies with contemporary standards in order to gain longer tenure.

These standards include having a compliant wastewater system installed at each shack site and a commitment to ongoing maintenance of these systems, which will be outlined in the lessee's lease agreement.

Meeting this standard is absolutely critical. The safe disposal and reuse of domestic or other wastewater is vital in protecting public and environmental health, particularly because many shacks are located in sensitive environmental areas.

In some shack areas, wastewater management solutions can be complex, requiring numerous approvals from regulatory authorities.

This information sheet will help you understand the process for selecting a suitable wastewater system, including understanding whether an existing system is compliant and the standards for compliance, researching suitable options, consulting neighbours, requesting Minister's consent (as the landowner) to undertake the works, approval requirements from other regulatory authorities, completing the installation and providing evidence of compliance.

Note: Some shack areas have specific wastewater system requirements. Shack lessees in these areas will receive an additional information sheet which is specifically related to their shack location and must be read in conjunction with the information provided in this document.

Before you begin

Before you begin the process of investigating and installing a suitable wastewater system, it is important to understand whether your shack is located on land that is subject to native title.

If it is, the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) might need to notify the native title holders regarding the installation of a wastewater system before works can commence. The native title holders could elect to apply conditions to any work that is proposed.

In addition, it is important to note that any works on shacks on Crown land or in national parks across South Australia must comply with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988*, which provides for the protection and preservation of Aboriginal heritage.

To help lessees, when a request for the Minister's consent to undertake works on Crown land is received DEW will undertake a search of the Register of Aboriginal Sites and Objects to investigate whether there are any culturally significant sites associated with your shack site, and will inform you if there are any risks and the course of action required.

Even if your shack site is not located on land that is subject to native title, and if there are no culturally significant sites found to be associated with your shack site, it's still important to remember that **if you encounter any cultural material** while undertaking any site work (such as installing a wastewater system), you must **immediately stop all works**. You will need to undertake an assessment consistent with a site discovery protocol, specific to the native title area that the shack is located in, and prior to recommencing any works.

Understanding the process

The process for investigating and determining the most suitable wastewater system for your shack site is outlined in the flowchart below. More information about each of these steps is included in the pages that follow.

STEP 1: Understand whether your existing wastewater system is compliant

If your shack has an existing wastewater system, determine whether it complies with the relevant public health regulations. Seek professional advice to make this determination.

(If yes: skip to Step 7. If no: proceed to Step 2)

STEP 2: Research the most appropriate wastewater system

If you need a new wastewater system, make sure you understand the requirements for your shack site and your particular location. Be sure to factor in costs and other considerations required to achieve compliance.

Seek independent advice from a qualified professional and the approving authority (local council).

STEP 3: Consult with your neighbours

If installing a new wastewater system or decommissioning an existing system is likely to impact your neighbours, discuss these works with them.

Step 4: Submit a request for the Minister's consent

Submit a 'Request for Minister's Consent' form for installation of the wastewater system with your designs attached. If you have not yet applied for longer tenure, this can be included as part of your concept proposal.

Notification of works in line with any Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs) will take place at this stage. This will take a maximum of 60 days.

Step 5: Submit an application for wastewater works approval

Once you have obtained Ministerial consent for your wastewater system, submit an application to the relevant authority (local council) to approve installation of the chosen wastewater system.

If required, your application will be referred to the Environment Protection Authority and SA Health.

Step 6: Begin installing your wastewater system

After gaining Ministerial consent and a wastewater works approval, you can begin installing your wastewater system.

Step 7: Provide a Certificate of Compliance

After installation is complete, request a Certificate of Compliance from a qualified professional.

This evidence must be provided to DEW and local council in order for the shack site to be considered for longer tenure.

Step 1: Understand whether your existing wastewater system is compliant

Wastewater systems need to comply with the South Australian [Public Health \(Wastewater\) Regulations 2013](#) and the [SA Health On-site Wastewater Systems Code April 2013 \(PDF 2901KB\)](#).

If you have an existing wastewater system you need to determine if it complies with these regulations and codes or if it could be altered to make it compliant. If it is not compliant, it will need to be removed. Seek advice about your wastewater system from a qualified wastewater professional (such as a wastewater engineer), local council or private certifier.

Ensure the wastewater system you choose complies with the requirements of other regulatory authorities. Some areas must comply with Environment Protection Authority (EPA) legislation because they are within a water protection zone. Please check if there is a specific wastewater info sheet available from DEW for your area which lists the preferred wastewater system most likely to be approved by all regulatory authorities. Links to further resources can be found at the end of this information sheet.

Step 2: Research the most appropriate wastewater system

Lessees need to determine the appropriate wastewater system for their shack site and cover all costs associated with meeting the wastewater standard.

Options could include holding tanks, septic tank and soakage systems, aerobic systems, Community Wastewater Management Systems (CWMS) – formerly called Septic Tank Effluent Drainage Scheme (STED) systems, alternative systems such as the reed bed system, or composting toilets.

The [On-site Wastewater Systems Code](#) sets out the procedures and technical requirements for these systems and, where applicable, their connection to a CWMS. It's up to you to consider if your site can meet the necessary technical and planning requirements.

If you're uncertain about what option is most suitable for your site, seek independent advice from an appropriately qualified person (such as a wastewater engineer), local council representative or private certifier.

Some wastewater systems may not be suitable for your shack site. Shacks in **water protection zones** (such as along the River Murray, Glenelg River, the Coorong) and in **national parks** have limited options. Please check the DEW website or speak to the DEW Shacks team to see if there is a wastewater information sheet for your area that lists the preferred wastewater system.

STEP 3: Consult with your neighbours

Adjoining landowners are those who own land that share common boundaries with your shack site. There could be several reasons that you should consult with adjoining landowners, such as:

1. **Installing a new wastewater system.** You might like to consider:
 - Is it likely to damage your neighbour's property or cause significant disturbance?
 - Do you need access to your neighbour's property for installation?
2. **Decommissioning or removing your old wastewater system.** You might like to consider:
 - Is it likely to damage your neighbour's property?
 - Will removal or decommissioning cause significance disturbance?

STEP 4: Submit an application for the Minister's Consent

When you have identified the suitable wastewater system for your shack site, you need to seek the Minister for Environment and Water's consent for the wastewater system (which is defined as an 'improvement') prior to installation. If you have an existing, non-compliant wastewater system, you must also include details about how you plan to remove or decommission it.

Native title notification will be undertaken as part of Step 4 and will require a maximum of 60 days before any ground disturbing works can proceed. Lessees will be notified if this applies to them, so they can plan accordingly.

Note: If you have not yet applied for longer tenure, you could include these details in your concept proposal and it will be assessed as part of your application. If you have already applied for longer tenure, submit your request for the Minister's Consent with your wastewater designs attached via the DEW Shacks Team email (DEWshacks@sa.gov.au).

STEP 5: Submit an application for wastewater works approval

After you have obtained the Minister's consent, you must apply for wastewater works approval from the relevant authority (your local council). Both of these approvals are required **before** you install, alter or remove an existing on-site wastewater system. Your local council will request a copy of the Minister's consent.

All wastewater systems must be certified in accordance with section 4.3 of the [On-site Wastewater Systems Code \(The Code\)](#).

Shack lessees (or applicants for a lease) must obtain a **wastewater works approval** from the relevant authority (which is their local council) to install or alter a wastewater system and, unless they obtain an exemption, must comply with The Code.

Applications for a wastewater works approval must be accompanied by the information specified for the wastewater system in The Code. Designs compiled by a wastewater engineer or suitable professional are strongly encouraged.

Note: In **water protection areas**, some wastewater systems will require written approval from SA Health and the Environment Protection Authority. If this is required, your application will be automatically referred to these other authorities when you apply for a wastewater works approval from your local council.

STEP 6: Begin installing your wastewater system

When you have gained both the Minister's consent and the wastewater works approval, you may begin installing or altering your wastewater system, and removing existing non-compliant systems if required. These works must be undertaken by a suitably qualified person as defined by the [Wastewater Regulations](#).

Make sure you only use **approved products** under the wastewater systems code. Approved products can be found on the SA Health website at [Wastewater products | SA Health](#).

STEP 7: Provide a Certificate of Compliance

Within 28 days of the installation or alteration of your wastewater system (or removal of a non-compliant system has been undertaken), make sure you receive a Certificate of Compliance from a suitably qualified person, such as a wastewater engineer or plumber.

This evidence of certification must be provided to DEW and to the local council to demonstrate you have met the wastewater conditions outlined within your interim 5-year lease agreement.

Resources

DEW, SA Health and local councils have worked together to develop the information contained in this information sheet. More information can be found at:

- [Wastewater: SA Health website](#)
- [South Australian Public Health \(Wastewater\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [On-site Wastewater Systems Code](#)
- [Australian Standards - Wastewater](#)
- [South Australian Community Wastewater Management System \(CWMS\) Design Criteria](#)

More information

For further information visit the [DEW Retaining Shacks webpage](#) or contact the DEW Shacks Team:

- (08) 8204 1218
- DEWshacks@sa.gov.au

The DEW Shacks Team aims to respond to emailed questions within five working days.