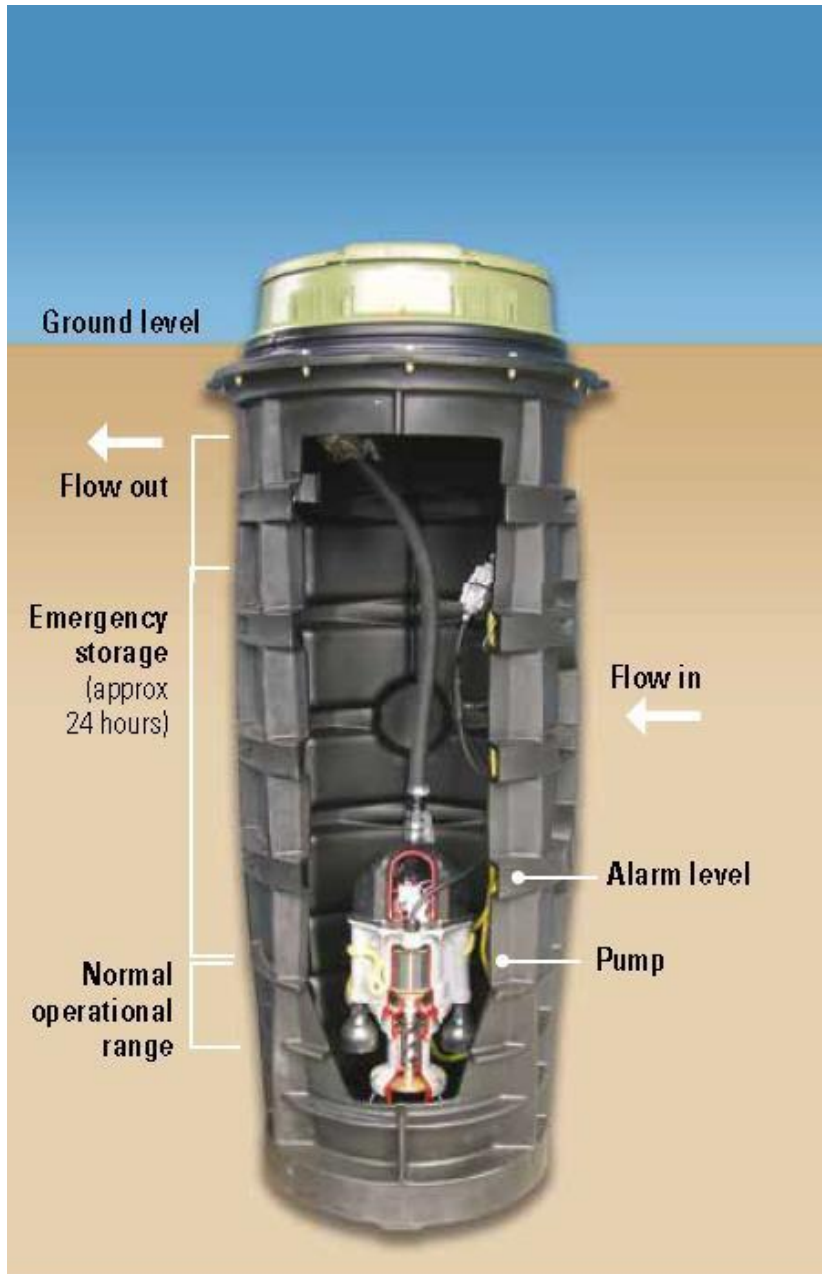


# Pressure Sewer

## *Homeowners Manual V2*



### **KEMPSEY SHIRE COUNCIL**

Civic Centre, 22 Tozer Street, West Kempsey

PO Box 3078, West Kempsey NSW 2440

Phone 02 6566 3200 Fax 02 6566 3205

Web: [www.kempsey.nsw.gov.au](http://www.kempsey.nsw.gov.au) Email: [ksc@kempsey.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ksc@kempsey.nsw.gov.au)



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## KEY CONTACTS

### Emergencies & Faults

(24 Hour - 7 days)

**(02) 6566 3200**

### General Enquiries

(Mon - Fri 8.30am–4.30pm)

**(02) 6566 3200**

### Further enquiries

**[ksc@kempsey.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ksc@kempsey.nsw.gov.au)**

## Using this manual

This manual is a guide to the operation and maintenance of the pressure sewer system installed on your property and to enable you to understand and manage the system in cooperation with the Kempsey Shire Council. Please take a few minutes to familiarise yourself with this document and keep it in a safe and readily accessible place. If the property is rented, the manual should be provided to the tenant along with an instruction for them to familiarise themselves with the Manual. Additional copies are available from Council's website and Council can assist by providing an overview to the tenant if required.

## About your pressure sewer system

Your property's sewerage service is provided by a pressure sewerage system. Pressure sewer is utilised on properties in certain applications due to unsuitability and/or cost of a conventional sewer system.

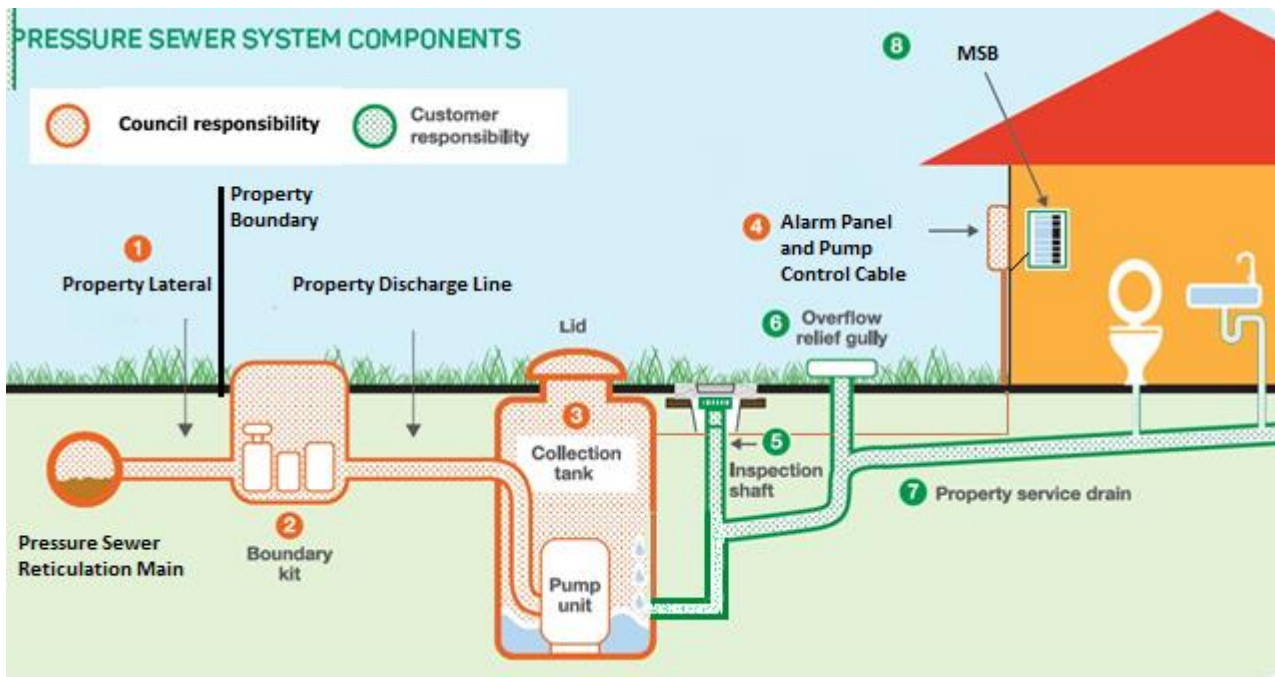
A Pressure Sewer System comprises a network of fully sealed pipes that carry commercial and household sewage to a treatment facility. A pressure sewer pump unit is located on each connected property where the pump grinds the waste into a liquid slurry and pumps to the reticulation system using a small diameter polyethylene pipeline within the property (property discharge line). Once installed, the only visible part of the pressure system within the property will be the boundary kit, tank lid and pump alarm panel.

Kempsey Shire Council owns and operates the Pressure System including the alarm panel, grinder pump, collection tank and property discharge line. Property owners will be responsible for the connection of their gravity service drain into the inspection shaft adjacent to the collection tank, and for the provision of an electrical connection from the main switchboard of the house to the alarm panel.

The resident is required to understand and follow the protocols of this Manual and need do nothing in relation to the operation of the pressure sewer unit. The units are owned by Council and maintenance costs are included in your sewerage rates. Council may charge property owners to repair damage where the pressure sewer system is not managed in accordance with this manual.



# Pressure sewer system components



## What makes up a pressure sewer system?

The pressure sewer system is made up of four key elements, as shown in **ORANGE** in the diagram above:

### 1. Property Discharge Line

The property discharge line is a small diameter pipe that connects the property's grinder pump to the pressure sewer in the street.

### 2. Boundary Kit

The boundary kit ensures that wastewater which is already in the pressure sewer cannot re-enter your property and enables maintenance staff to isolate the grinder pump from the reticulation system in the event of an outage.

### 3. Collection Tank and Grinder Pump

Installed underground, with only the top of the collection tank (or lid) visible, this component of the system includes a grinder pump and collection tank.

### 4. Alarm Panel

A small panel mounted to the wall of the house that provides power to the grinder pump. Includes both the audible and visual alarm systems for the purpose of providing adequate warning when the system needs to be serviced by Kempsey Shire Council.

### 5. Inspection Shaft

The inspection shaft is a plumbing fixture that allows plumbers to inspect and service your property service drain. It is a key fixture for future inspections and maintenance works that may be required on the property. It is important that property owners maintain access to this fixture. The inspection shaft is the responsibility of the property owner.

### 6. Overflow Relief Gully

An overflow relief gully protects the interior of your home or building from sewerage overflow. It is a drain-like fitting located outside the property that is an important part of the plumbing system.

In the event of a sewer blockage, the overflow relief gully is designed to release any sewerage flow away from the interior of the building and outside to a garden or external area. It is important for property owners to keep the overflow relief gully clear and unimpeded at all times. The overflow relief gully is the responsibility of the property owner.

### 7. Property Service Drain

The property service drain is the section of gravity pipeline connecting the sewage pipe outlets from the house to the inspection shaft adjacent to the collection tank. The property service drain is the responsibility of the property owner.

### 8. MSB

The MSB is the main electrical switchboard that connects the property to the power supply system. It will have a connection point and circuit breaker designated for the power supply to the alarm panel and grinder pump. The supply of power and associated costs is the responsibility of the property owner.

## How to care for your unit

The system will operate like a normal sewage system taking black and grey water generated by the property as part of normal day to day living.

There are a few golden rules pertaining to the operation of the pressure sewerage systems that you need to be aware of and comply with at all times.

**Do not attempt to repair the unit yourself.** Council is maintaining your unit on your behalf (as part of your sewer rates). Your actions may void the warranties attached to the system.

**Do not take off the lid or enter the pumping unit.** The inside of the pumping unit represents a confined space working environment that could be lethal.

**Do not discharge any of the prohibited substances set out below into the pressure sewerage system.**

**Do not connect your roof or yard drains into to the pressure sewerage system.** The pressure sewer system is not designed to accommodate stormwater flows.

**When going on holidays, flush the pressure sewerage system.**

**If evacuating in an emergency, turn off all power, including the power to the pumping unit.**

**When in doubt about your pressure sewerage system, ask Council.**

### Collection tank, pump unit and pipelines

The pressure sewer unit and alarm panel are Council assets – do not attempt to access or repair any component of the system yourself. Council will maintain the system as part of the sewer service. Council employees entering private property will have photographic identification and appropriate authorisation to enter the land (as required under the Local Government Act 1993) when residents are not present.

The lid of the collection tank is not strong enough to withstand the weight of heavy objects and may collapse when heavy loads are applied. Movement over and storage of materials on the lid shall avoided at all times.

The grinder pump and discharge pipes are totally sealed. If you notice unexplained wet patches around the collection tank or discharge pipe, contact Council as soon as possible to initiate a service call.

### Access to the pumping unit

The resident is responsible to ensure Council staff has access to the pressure sewer system at all times and where there is a need to remove the grinder pump from the property, a clear pathway required. Any property gates leading to the collection tank should be unlocked and pathways clear to allow access. Any resident that prevents access may be responsible for any additional costs incurred where additional equipment, such as cranes etc. are required.

The resident shall not bury the collection tank cover and is responsible to keep a one metre space clear of growth and other debris around the collection tank at all times to allow access by service staff.

Where pets are not secured, Council staff may refuse to enter the property to carry out repair works.

In all cases, a service charge may be levied where service staff are unable to access the pump unit or the system has failed due to misuse.

### Odours from unit

There should be no odours coming from the unit under normal operating conditions. If there are odours, the unit should be flushed by running 50 litres of clean water through a house fixture. If odours persist, contact Council.

### Respond to power failure and alarms

In the case of a power outage, the grinder pump will not operate and once power is restored, the unit automatically clears itself within an hour. When the power has been restored, the alarm may sound, follow the steps explained in "What to do if the alarm sounds" on page 6 of this Manual.

## Instances of flooding

In the case of a minor flood in your area, the system will be capable of operating as usual. In the case of a major flood, Council will isolate the power supply to the alarm panel, close the isolation valve in your boundary kit and sandbag the Overflow Relief Gully. Please try to limit your usage during this time. When power to the grinder pump is isolated, there should be approximately one day storage within the collection tank before overflow.

## Going on holiday

If going on holidays for more than three days, the property's pump unit will need to be flushed out to prevent potential odour problems. Flush the system by running 50 litres of clean water through a house fixture. Where a system causes local odour complaints arising from stale sewage and failure to flush that requires a service call from Council, a service fee may be levied. Power shall be maintained at all times to the pressure sewer system unless in flood condition as detailed above.



## Additional occupants and/or visitors

Sudden increases in use of a property's pump unit as a result of increased wastewater flows, either through increased activity at the residence or large numbers of visitors staying for a holiday period, will not impact upon the pressure sewerage system. The grinder pump unit might have to pump more frequently.

## Stormwater

The pressure sewer system has not been designed to accommodate rainwater and under no circumstances shall rainwater or stormwater be plumbed to the sewerage system. Drainage works shall be in accordance with the relevant Australian Standard which prohibits such discharges. If rainwater enters the system, alarms will activate, and the collection tank may overflow. If you notice the alarm regularly during or after rain, report this to Council.

## Installing a Swimming Pool or Spa

Installing a swimming pool, spa, external showers and wash down areas can result in large amounts of water being discharged. Council may impose special requirements on properties that are contemplating these types of installations. Please contact Council for further information.

## Extending or modifying your home or other building works

Please ensure that temporary or permanent structures are not built over the collection tank, boundary valve kit or house discharge line. A minimum horizontal clearance of one metre is required from the outside diameter, either side of the property discharge line and a minimum of two metres clearance is required from the collection tank lid. The property owner must contact Council if making property extensions or modifications which may affect any part of the system.

## Items that should not be put down the sewer

To avoid blockages and damage to the pressure sewer system the following items should NOT be placed into the system:

- **Cooking oil and fats**
- **Glass**
- **Metal**
- **Seafood Shells**
- **Rocks**
- **Nappies, socks, rags, or clothes**
- **Chemicals\***
- **Storm Water**
- **Plastic or wooden objects**
- **Paints (water and oil based)**
- **Sanitary napkins or tampons**
- **Kitty litter**
- **Flammable materials**
- **Lubricating oil and/or grease**
- **Petrol, diesel**
- **Salt water (sea water)**

\* Other than those used in normal domestic products such as dishwashing powder, detergents & hair dyes.

As with any wastewater treatment system that discharges to the environment, Kempsey Shire Council encourages the use of low sodium and low phosphorus products to minimise the impact that these chemicals have on the environment such as algal blooms and salinity.

If you are in any doubt about any substances entering the sewerage system you should call Kempsey Shire Council on the numbers given on page 1.


## Council not liable

Council will not be held liable for any overflows that may occur on the property where the resident has failed to notify Council. Residents will be liable for any flows that discharge from their property and may be prosecuted for environmental breaches if they have failed to notify Council. A record of all notifications will be maintained by Council.

# What to do if the alarm sounds

There are a number of reasons why the pump control alarm may be activated. You can still use your sewerage system if the alarm sounds as the pumping unit still has about a full day of storage above the level where the alarm will sound.

The following chart provides a step-by step guide to dealing with an activated alarm.

SYMPTOM	ALARM SOUNDS AND FLASHING LIGHTS	POWER OUTAGE	POWER OUTAGE FOR LONGER THAN 8 HOURS	ALARM SOUNDS FREQUENTLY AND THEN TURNS OFF	YOUR NEIGHBOUR'S ALARM SOUNDS
ACTION	TURN OFF AUDIBLE ALARM	WAIT ONE HOUR BEFORE REPORTING	MINIMISE WASTEWATER GENERATION AND ADVISE COUNCIL	INVESTIGATE	CONTACT US ON 6566 3200
HOW TO DO IT	<p>Press the button on the underside of the control panel to disable the audible alarm</p>  <p>The audible alarm will automatically shut off after a period of time (regardless of whether the button on the underside of the control panel is pressed)</p> <p>The flashing light will only turn off once the alarm condition is resolved.</p> <p>Contact Council on 6566 3200 if the flashing light does not turn off within 1 hour.</p>	<p>If the alarm activates following a power outage, please wait for one hour before contacting Council.</p> <p>The alarm may sound when the power is restored as the wastewater level in the storage tank may have built up to above the alarm level.</p> <p>Once power is restored, the pump will recommence pumping but may take up to an hour for the wastewater level in the tank to drop below the alarm level.</p> <p>Please minimise water usage (showers or general washing) during power outages to reduce the risk of overflow.</p>	<p>Reduce water usage by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Taking shorter showers.</li> <li>-Leave the bath plug in until after the alarm is cancelled or bucket out the water onto the lawn.</li> <li>-Limit gravity drainage from swimming pools or spas until after power is restored.</li> </ul> <p>Advise Council of extended power outages in your area, particularly if it appears that the duration may exceed 8 hours.</p> <p>In the event of extended power outage events, Council may need to make a service call and clear sewage from the collection tank.</p>	<p>Determine if there is any sudden discharge (such as from a swimming pool).</p> <p>If the alarm sounds during or after rainfall, rainwater may be entering the storage tank.</p> <p>Should the problem continue to occur, please contact Council who will carry out a service call to investigate the cause.</p>	<p>If you suspect your neighbour is not home, please contact us to inspect the property.</p> <p>The audible alarm will automatically shut off after a period of time.</p>