

Onsite wastewater update from Porirua City Council

Following discussions with the Pauatahanui Residents Association, PCC officers have reviewed the process for renewing onsite wastewater licences.

Properties with licences that are due to expire at the end of March in the up-coming year will be sent renewal applications in December, just over three months before the licence expires. This is so property owners can organise an authorised person to complete the assessment before the licence expiry date. A payment fee is required with each application, however, invoices will not be sent out until late February/ early March. So, as the property owner, you can either wait and send the application and payment together on receiving the invoice or make payment prior to this and it will be matched-up in our system on receipt of the application.

We have recently carried out a review of how long we are licensing systems for. A licence is granted for a certain period depending on the age, type, treatment stages and maintenance of the specific wastewater system. During the initial stages of licensing, we predominantly used the Australia/New Zealand Standard for Onsite wastewater management (AS/NZS 1547:2012) recommendation of three years. However, as more information is gained on how individual wastewater systems are functioning, the relicensing time frames will reflect this. A licence will usually be granted for a period of 3 years to 5 years, depending on the authorised person's recommendation. In a few cases a system may be licensed for less than the period recommended by the authorised person. In these cases we will give you a written explanation for why we have done this.

In particular we would like to clarify the difference between an inspection requirement and de-sludging as it has been brought to our attention that some property owners are under the misconception that tanks must be de-sludged on the date shown on the licence. On the licence it states: Authorised Person Maintenance Requirements

- De-sludging recommendation *date* unless there is evidence to show this has been completed and/or not required until a later date.

This means that, if on inspecting the tank, the authorised person does not believe that it needs to be emptied they can note on the renewal application the date on which they believe it should be done and this date will be included on the new licence.

Finally, we have made changes to the website, including updating the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). Also, you can now search for the information on 'onsite wastewater systems' with the commonly used term 'septic tank' which will direct you to Council's onsite wastewater page.

For further information on onsite wastewater systems licensing please refer to our website at: <http://www.pcc.govt.nz/A-Z-Services/Onsite-Wastewater-Systems>

Jim Sutton
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