

Guidelines for Aerobic Treatment Unit (ATU) Owners

in the Shire of Kalamunda

The ATU Owner's Responsibilities

The owner of a home serviced by an Aerobic Treatment Unit (ATU) is required to do the following:

1. Sustain arrangements for an authorised person to service the ATU and irrigation area;
2. Sustain a service contract with the authorised person to provide on going maintenance;
3. Ensure that the landscaping is maintained in the irrigation area so as to allow easy access to the ATU and the irrigation components;
4. Ensure that the two warning signs erected by the ATU company are maintained and the irrigation area is not subjected to human, vehicle or animal traffic; and
5. Have any necessary work—as advised by your service person—carried out to ensure the effective and efficient operation of the ATU and irrigation. In addition to replacing parts and chlorine (if necessary), your ATU may require pumping out by an approved liquid waste contractor.

It is extremely important that your ATU and irrigation area is properly maintained by an appropriately authorised person on a regular basis to ensure the efficient operation of your on-site wastewater treatment system. In this way you can safeguard the health of your family, as well as to protect the environment from inadequately treated wastewater and pathogens.

Because of the potential health implications should things go wrong, owners of ATUs are required by law to have an agreement with an AUTHORISED person to maintain the ATU at all times. Further, it is not permitted for the owner, or any other person who is not appropriately authorised, to interfere with the ATU or the irrigation system.

Your ATU's Alarm

Your ATU is required to have an audible and visual alarm device installed within your home to advise you of any problems with the wastewater treatment system or pump. You must ensure that the audible component of the alarm system is switched on at all times and only muted in the instance that a problem occurs.



Protecting Your ATU

To protect your ATU, it is important to avoid letting strong chemicals, bleaches, disinfectants, oils and alkalis enter your wastewater disposal system. While products indicating that they are "safe for septic systems" should be suitable, your manufacturer or maintenance company should be able to advise you of suitable cleaning products to ensure that your ATU is not compromised.

The use of water volumes of a quantity that will subject the system to a shock load should be avoided. For this reason, spas cannot be connected to ATU units.

As with septic systems, food waste disposal units cannot be used with ATUs.

The Permit to Use

At the time of installation, your aerobic treatment unit (ATU) was required to comply with the Code of Practice for the Design, Manufacture and Operation of ATUs Serving Single Dwellings and with particular conditions of approval imposed by the Shire of Kalamunda and the Executive Director, Public Health.

This permit is issued by a Shire Environmental Health Officer who has inspected the ATU and irrigation area following installation, and must be issued prior to the house being occupied. This confirms an Environmental Health Officer has inspected the system. It is also a good idea to obtain from the company that installed the ATU, a copy of all plans and approval conditions relevant to your ATU.

There are a number of things that the owners of an ATU can do to ensure that the ATU operates as efficiently as possible. As you can appreciate the efficient operation of your ATU is necessary to safeguard the sensitive environment in your area and resolve concerns regarding the potential health implications of ineffectual treatment of the effluent.

Further information can be obtained from the Shire of Kalamunda Health Service on 9257 9813.

