

Example of the alarm panels, alarm light and commission stickers

## WHAT TO DO IF AN ALARM SOUNDS

### Step 1 – Turn off the audible alarm

The audible alarm can be turned off by pressing the button on the underside of the alarm panel. This panel will be mounted on the wall of the house, shed, garage or on a stand-alone post. The alarm light cannot be turned off by the resident. It will be turned off when the repairs are completed and the pumping unit is operating normally.

### Step 2 – Wait an hour

If you have recently discharged a large amount of wastewater into the system for example from a spa or pool the unit may be temporarily overloaded. Similarly, if there has been a power failure, the alarm may sound when the power is restored because the volume of wastewater stored in the unit has reached the high-level trigger point. Turn off the audible alarm and wait approximately 1 hour. In this period the unit should pump out the stored wastewater, return to normal operation and the alarm light should go off. If during the hour the alarm sounds again or at the end of the hour the alarm light still has not turned off, contact Council.

### Step 3 – Report the alarm to Council (6767 5555 – all hours)

If the light on the alarm panel is still lit after an hour, call Tamworth Regional Council so that a service appointment can be scheduled. When you are speaking to Council staff, you may be asked if there is an urgent need for the repairs. If you are unsure staff will attend and assess the situation. If the alarm sounds out of hours, normally the preference is to undertake any repairs the next morning to minimise the inconvenience to residents and neighbours, to minimise potential damage to the property (particularly landscaping), and minimise system operational costs by avoiding costly after hours call outs.

### Step 4 – Minimise wastewater generation until the unit is repaired

In the period between when the alarm sounds and when it is repaired, you should minimise the overall volumes of wastewater being generated. This can be done by:

- not using washing machines or dishwashers
- keeping showers brief or where the resident takes a bath, leave the plug in or bucket out the water onto the lawn
- switching off any drainage from swimming pools or spas; and,
- practicing good water savings techniques such as not leaving taps running etc.

### Step 5 – Ensure the Council staff have access to the pumping unit

Ensure Council staff have access to the pumping unit. Staff may need to place a lifting frame above the pumping station to lift out the pump or need to carry the pump on a trolley to their truck.

### Step 6 – Confirm the pumping unit is repaired before reverting to normal operation

Council staff will inform the resident before leaving the site that all repairs have been carried out. If you have been away from the property you need to check that the repairs have been completed before returning to normal operation. This can be determined by visually confirming the alarm light is no longer illuminated.

## Information for Home Owners

# Low Pressure Sewer Systems



## ABOUT THE SYSTEM

Your property is connected to Council's sewer reticulation via a low pressure sewer system which relies on a pre-fabricated plastic pit that provides wastewater storage, grinding and pumping in a single self-contained unit.

Each house has its own personal unit wired to the household power supply and controlled by a small panel located near the unit, either on a wall, fence or pole

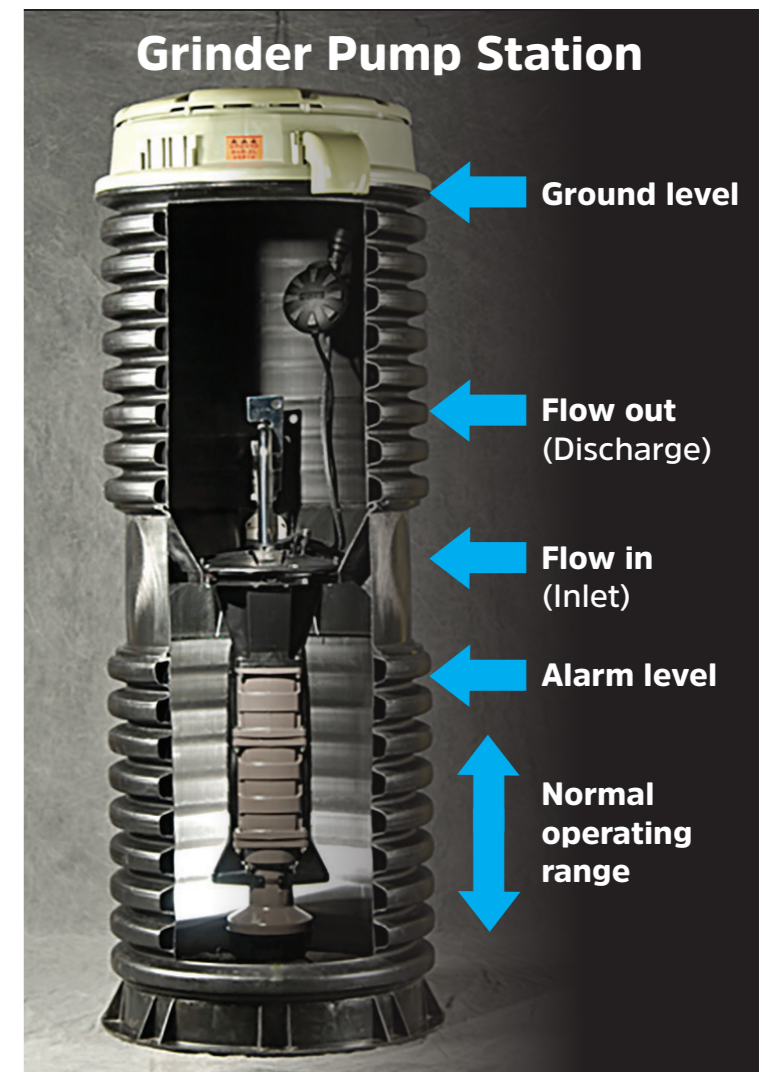
All wastewater generated from your property is directed to your individual unit. When the volume in the unit reaches a pre-set level, a switch activates the grinder pump. The pump operates until the level is reduced to a cut-off point. The amount of pump operation varies with the waste flows from your house. All units pump into a pressure sewer collection system, from there wastewater is transferred to the treatment plant.

Tamworth Regional Council owns and operates the unit and the pipework between the unit and reticulation system.

## SAFETY TIPS

### Digging in your yard

Take care when digging in the yard near the pump station or the discharge pipe. If you do accidentally break any pipeline, please call Tamworth Regional Council on 6767 5555 immediately and minimize use of water in the house. Do not attempt to repair the system yourself.





# Information for Home Owners Low Pressure Sewer Systems

## Keep pump station accessible

Ensure access is available to the pump station at all times. Keep plant growth and other debris away from the unit.

Do not go into the pumping unit; indeed, do not even take the lid off. The inside of the pumping unit is a confined space working environment that could be lethal without the appropriate training and equipment.

## USING THE SYSTEM

Please do not place any of the items listed below into your toilet, sink, shower, bathtub, garbage disposal, or other drain.

- Fat, oils, and grease
- Diapers or baby wipes
- Tampons, applicators, sanitary napkins
- Rags, cloths, towels, socks, underwear
- Cotton Swabs
- Rubber or latex items
- Cigarette butts
- Syringes
- Food wrappers
- Glass
- Metal
- Plastic
- Flammable or hazardous materials
- Strong chemicals or paint thinners
- Any pharmaceutical products

When the wrong thing is flushed, results can include costly damage to your grinder pump, backups on your property, problems at your local wastewater treatment plant, or be harmful to the environment. Even if the label reads "flushable," it's safer to place the item in a trashcan.

Should something go wrong with the unit or the collection system, the water level in the unit will reach an alert trigger that sets off both a visible and audible alarm. The audible alarm can be manually turned off at the control panel.

You then need to contact Tamworth Regional Council on 6767 5555 and service personnel will assess the problem. Should the pump require repairs, it can be readily removed and replaced with another pump by the service personnel.

## DO NOT attempt to repair the pressure sewer unit yourself.

Your actions may void the warranties attached to the system. Tamworth Regional Council will maintain your pressure sewer unit on your behalf.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

### What level of odour can be expected from the unit?

When operating normally there should be no noticeable odours coming from the unit. If you detect an odour, the unit may need flushing. Just run clean water down your kitchen, laundry or bathroom sink for about 10 minutes. If the odour remains, call Council.

### Who is responsible for the power supply cabling?

The control panel and cable to the pump is owned and operated by Tamworth Regional Council. All connecting electrical cable work is installed within the required protective conduit. Particular care has been taken to ensure that all buried cables are easily identified to prevent any future disturbance.

### What should I do if I want to construct a pool or install a spa after my low pressure sewer unit has been installed?

Backwash from pools and spas is directed to the low pressure sewer unit. In some cases, the increased flow necessitates the installation of an additional storage unit adjacent to the existing unit to allow backwash water to be pumped away without triggering the high-level alarm. If you are considering a pool or a spa you should contact Council (6767 5555) during office hours to discuss.

### What is the average annual power cost to run the pump units?

Based on current power tariffs, the estimated annual cost to operate the pump units is between \$25 and \$35 for an average family household and is the responsibility of the property owner.

### Am I going to be charged for repairs?

There is no cost for repairs carried out by Council as these are covered in your sewerage rates, however Council may charge for damage done to the pipeline located on your property and / or damage to the pump if prohibited substances are placed in the tank.

### What happens when/if there is a power failure?

The unit has in-built storage that would allow for the restricted use of wastewater facilities during the power outage. Facilities such as showers and baths should be kept to a bare minimum until power is restored.

### What if the pump breaks down?

If the pump breaks down, an audible alarm will sound to warn you that the system is not working. Please contact Council immediately to arrange for repairs. If this occurs, it DOES NOT mean you can no longer use your sewerage system. The pressure sewer unit has around 430 litres of storage above where the alarm will sound.

### Can I cover the pressure sewer unit?

You cannot cover the lid of the unit as it needs to be readily accessible if repairs are required to the unit. There is also an air filter in the lid which must be exposed. Council will not be responsible for repairs to landscaped areas if there is not sufficient access for Council staff to undertake any necessary repairs to the pressure unit.

### Noticing wet spots around the pumping unit or the discharge pipe?

The pumping unit and discharge pipe are totally sealed. If you notice wet spots around the unit or pipe and there has not been any recent rain, call Council on 6767 5555.

### What happens when I go on holidays?

If you go on holiday for an extended length of time, flush the system before you go away. To do this, run clean water into the unit until the pump activates. Turn off the water and allow the grinder pump to run until it shuts off automatically. Filling the bathtub and discharging it will achieve such a flush.