

# Fact sheet:

## Fire-impacted septic systems



Environment  
Protection  
Authority Victoria



Publication 1811 January 2020

Fact sheet

### Returning to your property after a fire

If your property has been affected by fire, a licensed plumber or service technician should assess your septic system for safety and function. Your local council can provide information on these assessments or inspections.

If you use a damaged system, there's a risk that sewage could back up into your house or garden. This could cause a human health and pollution risk. You may not be able to use your septic system until it has been repaired or replaced.

### Septic systems

Onsite wastewater management systems (commonly known as septic tanks) are used on residential, community and business premises. They treat, recycle or dispose of:

- greywater, which comes from showers, baths, hand basins, washing machines, laundry troughs and kitchens
- blackwater, which is toilet waste (from water-flush, incineration or dry composting systems)
- sewage, which is combined greywater and blackwater.

### Assessing damage

Fire may have damaged the septic systems at your property.

Parts of the system which may be damaged include:

- shallow PVC pipes, which may be melted or blocked
- plastic tanks and sumps (concrete tanks are less likely to be damaged, but should still be inspected)
- plastic irrigation pipework, which may also be heat affected
- pumps and other equipment with electrical components.

If you need to replace your system, you can find information about regulations and systems on [EPA's website](#).

Your local council issues permits to install or alter a septic system. They will be able to advise you on the process to apply for a permit.

### Further information

Contact EPA  
**1300 372 842** (24 hours)  
(1300 EPA VIC)  
[epa.vic.gov.au](http://epa.vic.gov.au)

Incident information and updates:  
VicEmergency hotline 1800 226 226  
[emergency.vic.gov.au](http://emergency.vic.gov.au)

