



# HOMEOWNER'S MANUAL

## PRESSURE SEWERAGE SYSTEM



**ROTORUA**  
LAKES COUNCIL

(07) 348 4199 - 24 hours



**For more information, visit our  
website using this QR code**



You can download a PDF of this booklet and  
access replacement sticker information by visiting  
**[rotorualakescouncil.nz/HomeownerManuals](https://rotorualakescouncil.nz/HomeownerManuals)**



## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- For help with your sewerage system please phone Rotorua Lakes Council on (07) 348 4199
- Do not turn off the electricity to the pump
- Under no circumstances should you operate the boundary valves
- The storage tank lid should not be buried or covered in any way
- Do not drive or park on top of the tank
- The pump discharge line should not be moved or altered in any way
- The household wastewater line is your responsibility and when damaged you should contact a licensed plumber or a licensed drainlayer, depending on where the problem is, to fix any faults
- Never flush wet wipes into the system
- You should not build over the storage tank, discharge line and boundary kit
- Operation and servicing of the system is included in the general sewerage rates paid by the owner to Rotorua Lakes Council

### **The exceptions to this will be if you have:**

- Discharged matter into the pumping unit that you have been advised not to (refer to Section 6.2)
- Tampered with the pumping unit, storage tank or controls
- Interfered with or damaged the pump discharge line or boundary kit
- Sealed off the venting to the unit



# CONTENTS

<b>1.0 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>6</b>
.....	
<b>2.0 EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS</b>	<b>6</b>
.....	
<b>3.0 WHAT TO DO IF THE ALARM SOUNDS</b>	<b>6</b>
.....	
<b>4.0 PARTS OF YOUR PRESSURE SEWERAGE SYSTEM</b>	<b>8</b>
4.1 Boundary Kit	8
4.2 Pumping Unit	9
4.3 Pump Discharge Line	9
4.4 Electrical Power Controls and Alarm	9
4.5 Household Wastewater Line	10
.....	
<b>5.0 HOW A PRESSURE SEWERAGE SYSTEM WORKS</b>	<b>10</b>
.....	
<b>6.0 SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS</b>	<b>11</b>
6.1 Going on Holiday	11
6.2 Items that Should Not be Flushed Down the Sewer	11
.....	
<b>7.0 REPAIRS TO THE PUMPING UNIT</b>	<b>12</b>
7.1 Warranties / Repair Costs	12
7.2 Service Arrangements	12
.....	
<b>8.0 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS</b>	<b>13</b>
8.1 Burst Mains	13
8.2 If the Alarm is Activated When You Are Not At Home	13
8.3 Loading on the Storage Tank Covers	13
8.4 Roof and Rainwater	13
8.5 Building a Garage, Carport or Garden Shed	13
8.6 Building an Extension to Your House	13
8.7 Landscaping Your Garden	14
8.8 Installing a Swimming Pool or Large Spa	14
8.9 Large Gathering	14

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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Rotorua Lakes Council has provided a pressure sewerage system on your property.

This is your Homeowner's Manual for the equipment located on your property. Please read this manual and store it in a safe place.

## 2.0 EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

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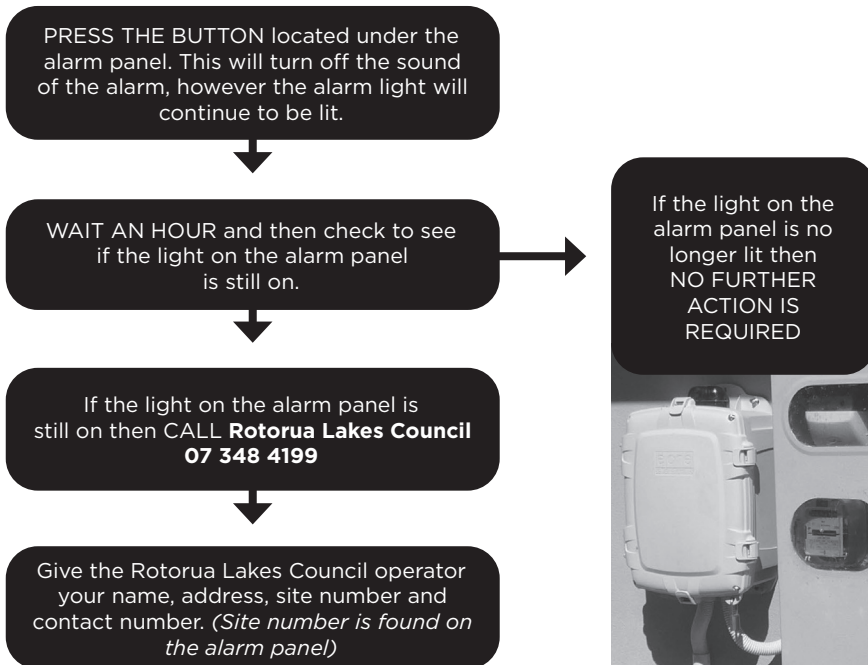
For help with your sewerage system please phone Rotorua Lakes Council on **(07) 348 4199 (24 hours)**.

Advise the operator that you are connected to a Pressure Sewerage System and provide your property details (each pressure sewer system will have a unique identifier number located on the sticker or tag on the alarm panel). For non-urgent matters email: [info@rotorualc.nz](mailto:info@rotorualc.nz)

## 3.0 WHAT TO DO IF THE ALARM SOUNDS

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When the pumping unit alarm is activated, it will make a sound, and a red light will come on. If this happens you should take the following steps:



1. Silence the alarm by pressing the button under the alarm panel. Please note you cannot turn off the red light. It will turn off when the problem has been rectified and the pumping unit is functioning properly.
2. Phone Rotorua Lakes Council on **(07) 348 4199** and report that the alarm has been activated. Please state clearly that you are ringing about your LPGP alarm. **Interruption to Power Supply**

If the alarm sounds immediately after a power outage, press the button under the alarm panel to silence the alarm, but wait one hour before phoning the Rotorua Lakes Council on **(07) 348 4199**.

Storage levels can trigger the alarm during a power outage but will return to normal once power has been restored. If the red light has turned off after one hour, the system has returned to normal operation.

If the red light is still on after one hour, please phone the Rotorua Lakes Council on **(07) 348 4199**.

During a power outage please do not use more water than is necessary for your essential needs.

3. Minimise the discharge of water into the pressure sewerage system when the alarm is on by.
  - Keeping showers brief,
  - After taking a bath, leaving the bath full until the alarm ceases,
  - Ensuring taps are not left running,
  - Avoiding using the washing machine and automatic dishwashers.

Minimising your discharge of wastewater into the system does not mean that you cannot flush toilets or undertake your normal kitchen activities while the alarm is still operating.

If it appears that the power outage may last longer than eight hours, Trility may visit your property to empty the system.

4. Provide Council and Trility staff with access to the pump unit at all times. Please ensure that any gates are unlocked and vehicles do not block access to the pumping unit and that any dogs are tied up.
5. If the alarm sounds and then turns off on a regular basis, please consider the following:
  - Do you have an appliance connected to your wastewater system that empties a large amount of water quickly into the pressure sewerage system?
  - Is the alarm sounding during or immediately after rain? This may indicate that you have stormwater entering your drainage system.

These issues will need to be dealt with as they may cause you significant problems, so please report to the Rotorua Lakes Council by phoning (07) 348 4199. Continue to use your pressure sewerage system as normal.

## 4.0 PARTS OF YOUR PRESSURE SEWERAGE SYSTEM

The pressure sewerage system comprises five main parts:

1. A boundary valve assembly inside a box located just inside or outside your property boundary, and collectively known as the boundary kit,
2. A pumping unit inside a storage tank,
3. A discharge line from the storage tank to the boundary kit,
4. The electrical power controls and alarm,
5. The house wastewater line.

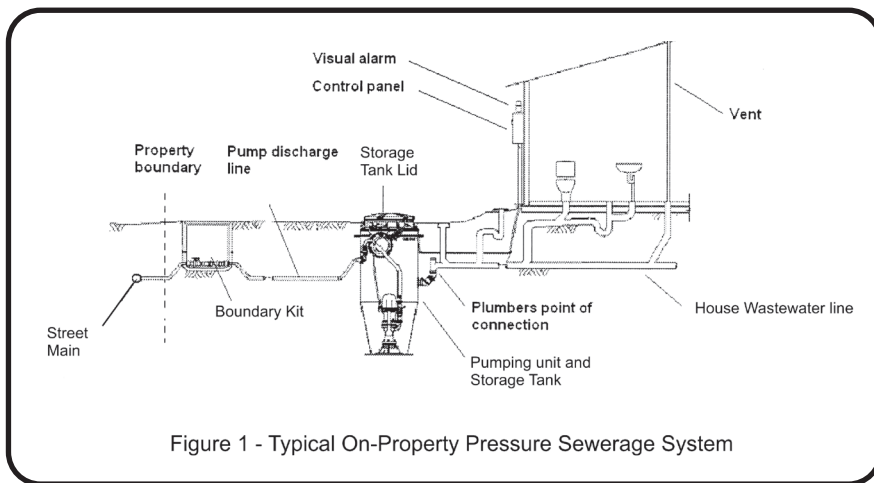


Figure 1 - Typical On-Property Pressure Sewerage System

### 4.1 Boundary Kit

Between the pump discharge line and the street main a one-way valve and isolation valve has been installed. This will:

- Prevent flow from other properties entering your service line,
- Allow your property to be isolated for repairs to be done,
- Allow flushing of the system if required.

**Under no circumstances should you operate these valves.**

Rotorua Lakes Council will operate these valves when necessary.



#### 4.2 Pumping Unit

The grinder pump unit is housed within a polyethylene storage tank placed on your property. Within the tank there are mechanical and electrical components that control the system. The small grinder blades at the inlet to the pump are able to break up sewage solids and allow them to be pumped through the discharge line to our sewer street main. Most of the storage tank is buried below ground, but the lid needs to protrude from the ground to allow access for servicing and ventilation into the pump chamber.

**The storage tank should protrude about 120mm out of the ground at all times. This will allow pressure equalisation of the pump unit and access for service calls when required.**

**The storage tank lid should not be buried or covered in any way.**

#### 4.3 Pump Discharge Line

The pump discharge line connects the pumping unit to the boundary kit. This line is used to discharge sewage from the property.

**The pump discharge line should not be moved or altered in any way.**

#### 4.4 Electrical Power Controls and Alarm

The power and control functions for the pump are located in a locked panel mounted on a post, near the storage tank. A generator connection and switch are located next to the panel for the use of the Rotorua Lakes Council in circumstances where power to your house or local area is disrupted for a lengthy period.

The electrical cable between the house, the alarm panel and the pump chamber are located in a duct buried 300 – 400mm below ground level. Please be careful when you or other contractors undertake excavation work on your property, refer to the Council's property files for "as-built" information regarding the location of the electrical cables and the discharge line.

**Only Rotorua Lakes Council personnel are to work or service any of the electrical power and alarm installations. Do not attempt to connect any power supply to the generator connection point.**



**The electrical equipment inside the control/alarm panel and the alarm light run on 240-volt power. Please notify the council of any damage to this installation and stay away from damaged parts.**

#### **4.5 Household Wastewater Line**

The household wastewater line collects waste from your kitchen, toilet, and other sanitary fittings, and drains under gravity flow to the storage tank.

**The household wastewater line is your responsibility and when damaged you should contact a licensed plumber or a licensed drainlayer, depending on where the problem is, to fix any faults.**

## **5.0 HOW A PRESSURE SEWERAGE SYSTEM WORKS**

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Pressure sewerage systems differ from conventional gravity systems in that they depend on a pumping unit to remove the sewage from the property. A small pumping unit is installed on the property to pump household sewage into our sewerage network located within the street.

### **The pumping unit works in the following manner:**

- The pump has a small grinder that grinds up solids in the tank so they can be passed through the pump discharge line to our street main.
- The storage tank will hold household sewage until its level reaches the 'pump-on' level which is x% of the total storage in the tank. When this occurs, the pump will automatically turn on and pump the sewage to the street main.
- When the level falls to a certain pre-set level, the pump will automatically switch off.
- Typically, a pumping cycle will take between one to three minutes and will occur several times per day around the periods of high usage.
- If the pump fails to operate, the level of sewage will continue to increase until it reaches an 'alarm level' where both an audible (sound) and a visual (light) alarm will automatically turn on. This level is about one third of the total capacity of the tank, so there is still a lot of capacity within the tank once the alarm is activated.
- The alarm (both sound/light) may also be activated as a result of power returning after a power outage. In all cases the alarm will automatically shut off when the storage level drops below the alarm level. The alarm is in the small, locked panel that has been attached to a post. The alarm can be switched off by pressing the small button under the alarm panel.
- The storage tank has a minimum capacity of 660 litres and when combined with household drains should give at least 750 litres of total storage. Much of this storage capacity is above the alarm level activation point. Therefore, you can continue to use essential services after the alarm sounds, although we strongly recommend you keep water use to a minimum and avoid activities which are heavy water users until the system is repaired.

## 6.0 SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS

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### 6.1 Going on Holiday

It is suggested that before you depart that you:

- Partially fill the bathtub and then release it into the drain or run your washing machine through a cycle. This will activate the pump in the tank and flush clean water through the system.
- Advise your neighbors of the procedure should the alarm be activated. They can contact us in the event of the alarm sounding.
- Do not turn off the power to the pumping unit. If the unit is turned off at the power board, the alarm will not sound to warn neighbors if a problem does occur.

**It is highly unlikely that there will be an alarm incident while you are away on holiday, as no sewage will be entering the system.**

### 6.2 Items that Should Not be Flushed Down the Sewer

Some things are not meant to go into the sewer and these can result in a blockage of the discharge pipeline, damage to the grinder pump unit, danger to the people that service the units and environmental pollution.

**The following substances are not to be discharged into this or any other household sewerage system under any circumstances:**

- Rocks, broken glass, sand, metal, seafood shells and kitty litter,
- Nappies, socks, rags, pantyhose, clothes, plastic objects, sanitary napkins, tampons, wet wipes or similar products,
- Paints (water soluble or oil based), explosives, flammable materials, lubricating oils, chemicals, grease, petrol and diesel,
- Milk, food scraps, eggshells and cooking oil.

The pressure sewerage system should perform and accept the same materials as your previous septic tank or any gravity system.

**If you are in doubt about any substances entering the sewerage system, please phone Rotorua Lakes Council on (07) 348 4199.**

**To avoid blockages and damage to the Pressure Sewerage System the following items should NOT be placed into the system**

- glass
- metal
- gravel or sand, including aquarium stone
- seafood shells
- socks, rags or clothes
- plastic
- diapers, sanitary napkins or tampons
- wet wipes
- kitty litter
- explosives
- flammable materials
- lubricating oil, grease
- strong chemicals
- petrol, diesel
- storm water run off

## **7.0 REPAIRS TO THE PUMPING UNIT**

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Rotorua Lakes Council will service and repair the pressure sewerage installation on your property, and in the street. Rotorua Lakes Council is not responsible for household plumbing that drains to the storage tank.

Repairs to the property owner's plumbing system, up to the connection to the storage tank, are at the owner's expense, as are repairs for any other form of sewerage system.

### **7.1 Warranties / Repair Costs**

Operation and servicing of the system is included in the general sewerage rates paid by the owner to Rotorua Lakes Council.

The exceptions to this will be if you have:

- Discharged matter into the pumping unit that you have been advised not to (refer to Section 6.2),
- Tampered with the pumping unit, storage tank or controls,
- Interfered with or damaged the pump discharge line or boundary kit,
- Sealed off the venting to the unit.

### **7.2 Service Arrangements**

In most cases repairs will be undertaken by replacing the grinder pump unit. This can be done on your property and should take less than one hour to complete once a service crew is on site.

## **8.0 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

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### **8.1 Burst Mains**

Wet ground or water eruptions from the ground between the storage tank and the boundary kit may indicate a burst pipe.

If the pumping discharge line is damaged, please phone Rotorua Lakes Council on (07) 348 4199 immediately and turn off the power to the pump at your power board. During a burst pipe incident minimise the discharge of wastewater to the system as set out in Section 3.

Please phone Rotorua Lakes Council if you notice the ground around the storage tank is wet as this may indicate a damaged pipe. We will inspect the site to determine the source of the problem.

### **8.2 If the Alarm is Activated When You Are Not At Home**

The alarm will continue to sound until it is cancelled, and the red light will remain on. If you arrive home and the alarm is activated and the red light is on, please contact us and report that the alarm has been activated.

If your alarm is activated when you are not at home, a neighbor may silence it. If they do this, they should also phone the council.

### **8.3 Loading on the Storage Tank Covers**

The storage tank cover is safe to walk on, but vehicles must keep off the cover.

**Please do not cover the lid with any large objects.**

### **8.4 Roof and Rainwater**

The pumping unit is NOT designed to accommodate stormwater. Rotorua Lakes Council does not allow the discharge of stormwater into any sewerage system. Stormwater should not have been discharged into your septic tank, as it will affect the efficiency of the system.

The unit is sealed and the discharge of stormwater into the sewerage system should not be an issue. However, if stormwater is entering your sewerage system the pump capacity may not keep up with the flow. This could affect the sewer and flood your property. If you notice the alarm regularly coming on after or during rain, please contact Rotorua Lakes Council so we can investigate the cause.

### **8.5 Building a Garage, Carport or Garden Shed**

No temporary or permanent structure can be built over the pump discharge line, boundary kit or storage tank.

### **8.6 Building an Extension to Your House**

The pump discharge line can be moved to accommodate extensions to the house or construction of a swimming pool, shed etc. When contemplating any modifications to the property, the owner needs to check the property sewerage

service diagram to see where the on-site installations are, plan the property extensions with that in mind and phone Rotorua Lakes Council to determine what will be involved in any relocation of its assets.

**You should not build over the storage tank, discharge line and boundary kit.**

**If you wish to build in this location please phone the District Council on (07) 348 4199 and tell the operator you would like to speak to someone from the Engineering Department, to discuss the relocation of the discharge line and/or storage tank.**

### **8.7 Landscaping Your Garden**

It is important that sufficient space is available to access the unit at all times, in case servicing is required.

Landscaping over the pump discharge line is permitted, provided the storage tank cover remains accessible for service, and is not covered or put into a low-lying depression or 'sump' area.

If the pump discharge line requires repairs, the council will need to access the pipe. If landscaping needs to be removed, we will endeavour to minimise disruption to the garden.

### **8.8 Installing a Swimming Pool or Large Spa**

If you already have a swimming pool or large spa, you should continue to dispose of water or backwash from that installation to ground soakage.

If you are required to dispose of water from your swimming pool or large spa pool, or backwash water to the sewerage system due to geotechnical and/or flooding issues, please contact Rotorua Lakes Council and discuss options for discharging into the pressure sewerage system. If you discharge into the pressure sewerage system at a rate greater than the pumping capacity of the system, your alarm will sound and an overflow from the house plumbing or storage tank cover could occur.

### **8.9 Large Gatherings of People**

Sudden loads on the system, either through parties or large numbers of visitors staying overnight, will not impact upon the pressure sewerage system. The unit will pump more frequently to cope.





**TRILITY**

**ROTORUA  
LAKES COUNCIL**

