

# Council Home Owners Manual for Pressure Wastewater Collection [PWC]

**Please read this manual and keep it in a safe and accessible place. You should re-familiarise yourself with it each year. If the property is rented then the manual should be provided to the tenant along with instructions to familiarise themselves with the document. Additional copies of the document are available from Council.**

Your Approved Installer emergency Call Centre  
number:

**0800 - XXXXX**

---

## **1. Your Pressure Wastewater Collection (PWC) System**

The wastewater collection service on your property is provided by a pressure wastewater collection system, referred to as a PWC system. These systems have been in operation for 30 years in the USA and should require little more thought or effort on the part of the resident than for a more conventional wastewater system.

Because it is an electrical pumping system reliant on power, if the alarm attached to the system sounds (which should be infrequently), the resident should phone the emergency number supplied by the Approved Installer. As there is no preventative maintenance required this agency will not be onsite except in response to your call for assistance.

This manual is to assist you with the operation of your PWC system and what to do if things go wrong. If you wish for more information on PWC systems, go to Rodney District Council's ("**Council**") web site [www.rodney.govt.nz](http://www.rodney.govt.nz) or obtain a special brochure available from the Council. This manual is intended to supplement the contractual arrangements between you and your Approved Installer to ensure that your PWC system operates correctly.

## 1.1 Critical operational Rules

These are the critical rules for the proper operation of the PWC system that you should know and comply with at all times:

1. Do not try to repair the unit yourself. The Approved Installer's call centre will respond to your call. Your actions may breach the warranties attached to the system.
2. Do not go into the PWC tank. Do not take the lid off the unit.
3. Do not discharge any of the prohibited substances set out in section 1.3 below into your system.
4. Do not connect any storm water drains to the system.
5. When going on holidays, flush your system as set out in section 1.4 below.
6. If evacuating your property in an emergency, turn off all power, including the power to the system.
7. If you have any questions or concerns about this system, call your Approved Supplier's call centre for more information.

## 1.2 What is expected of the resident

You are expected to carry out the following actions to do with the operation of your PWC system:

- If the alarm sounds, contact the Approved Installer Call Centre and follow the steps in Section 2.
- Make sure that your household drains are appropriately maintained and make sure the venting to the system remains clear.
- Do not touch the valves in the Boundary Kit outside your boundary.
- Do not turn off the power supply to the pumps except under emergency situations or in response to a broken pressure pipe.
- Familiarise yourself with the location of the private pressure main, and avoid damage to the pipeline and system.

The PWC system is connected to the power board on your property but will be on its own circuit. The unit turns itself off and on automatically based upon the level of the wastewater in the storage vessel. There is no need to do anything in relation to its normal day-to-day operation.

### 1.3 What NOT to discharge into the PWC System

Do not put the following substances into your PWC system, to avoid blockages or damage to the pump and/or grinder unit:

- Diapers, socks, rags, etc
- Metal, Plastic Objects
- Seafood Shells
- Goldfish Stone (Aquarium Gravel)
- Gasoline / Diesoline
- Paints/ Solvents
- Sanitary Napkins/ Tampons
- Kitty Litter/ Gravel/Sand etc
- Flammable Materials
- Lubricating Oil and/or Grease
- Strong Chemicals/ Explosives
- Acids or alkalines

### 1.4 Going on Holiday?

If you will be away from your property for more than 24 hours and there will be no one at home the PWC system should be flushed out before you leave.. This will avoid potentially offensive odours from the system while you are away. It is suggested that you run clean water into the PWC system until the pump activates and runs for about 30 seconds. Filling the bathtub and then emptying it will achieve this.

Do not turn off the power to the PWC system, even if you are turning off the power to the rest of your property, in case there are any leaking taps which might fill the storage vessel.

If you don't flush out your PWC system before going on holiday and your Approved Installer has to carry out a flush of the system in response to complaints from your neighbours, you will be liable for any call-out fees and other costs.

## 2. What to do if an Alarm sounds

When an alarm sounds or the emergency light is on, you should respond by following the simple steps set out below:

**Step 1 – Turn off the audible alarm:** This alarm can be turned off by pressing the button on the control panel for your PWC system. The alarm light cannot be turned off by you. It will turn itself off when the repairs are completed and the system is operating normally.

**Step 2 – Find out if there has been a Power Blackout:** If the alarm sounds immediately after a power failure (on an area wide basis), wait for one hour before calling the Approved Installer Call Centre. The alarm could in these instances sound when the power is restored, simply due to storage of wastewater during the power outage. In this case there could be a number of units trying to pump at the same time, but the PWC system will limit the number of units that can pump. The PWC system will take time to clear.

### **Step 3 – Report the Alarm to your Approved Installer Call Centre**

Contact the Approved Installer Call Centre using the number on the control panel for your PWC system. Before doing this investigate the following:

- Is there any wastewater coming from the overflow relief gully? (This is the inspection opening just upstream of the PWC unit.)
- Are there any wastewater discharges onto the surface of your property?
- Are there any perceptible odour problems?
- Has there been a power failure (as per step 2) and have you waited the suggested 1 hour before calling?
- Is the PWC system making any unusual noises?

The operator at the Approved Installer Call Centre will ask you questions, as well as verifying your identification for reference purposes. There is no specific cost for normal calls to the call centre. However any action resulting in a visit to the installation, inspection, repairs, emergency support, etc, will be at the cost of the resident.

### **Step 4 – Agree with Approved Installer Call Centre on appropriate action**

When speaking to an Approved Installer Call Centre operator please confirm if there is a need for repairs to be carried out immediately. Please note that after hours repairs will normally be delayed until the next morning, for the following reasons:

- to minimise the inconvenience to you and your neighbours and to minimise any potential damage to the property (particularly landscaping); and
- keep overall PWC system operational costs to the resident down.

### **Step 5 – Minimise Wastewater until the PWC System is repaired**

After contacting the Approved Installer Call Centre you should minimise the amount of wastewater being discharged into your PWC system until necessary repairs are carried out, including:

1. do not turn on any clothes washing machines or automatic dishwashers whilst the alarm is active.
2. keep showers quite brief, and leave the plug in after bathing or bucket out the water onto the lawn.
3. switch off any drainage (automated or not) from swimming pools, spas, etc until after the unit has been repaired.
4. practice other good water saving techniques such as not leaving taps running etc.

### **Step 6 – Ensure the Approved Operator has access to the PWC System**

Assist the Approved Installer with access to the PWC system. The following actions should be taken:

1. Ensure property gates leading to the PWC system are unlocked.
2. Ensure that the driveway or pathway leading to these gates is clear.
3. The PWC system may be covered by tanbark or pot plants that should be moved by you when repairs are required. **Note the PWC system is not to be buried nor paved over nor concreted over nor permanently covered in any other manner.**
4. If your pets are not secured, the Approved Installer may refuse to enter the property and carry out any repair works.
5. Access to the PWC system for a trolley device will be required to enable the Approved Installer to place a lifting frame above the PWC system to lift out the pump and carry it to their vehicle.
6. If you live in a secure property, you must be present to allow the Approved Installer access to your property at an agreed time, to be arranged when notifying the relevant call centre of the problem failure.

### **Step 7 – Confirm the PWC Unit is repaired before operating It**

The Approved Installer will inform you before leaving your property 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 operating. This can be determined by the alarm light no longer being illuminated.

### **Step 8 – Meeting the cost of repair work**

The Approved Installer will directly invoice you for any costs.

## **4. What to do if the PWC main breaks**

The pipeline from the PWC unit to the Boundary Kit is a flexible, black polyethylene pipe laid at an approximate depth of 450mm. This is a sealed pipe system, with no joints. The pipeline should not break as a result of ground movement hence the most likely cause of a pipe break will be excavation near the pipeline and accidentally striking the pipeline. Always ensure you are aware of where the pipe is before commencing any excavation on your property, and in the unlikely event that this pipe should break it will behave like a broken water main. If this occurs then you should take the following steps.

**Step 1 – Turn off the power to the pump:** Turn off the power to the pump on the household switchboard. These pumps have a separate (and clearly labeled) circuit and will not impact the remainder of the house if they are turned off.

**Step 2:** Report the broken main to the relevant Approved Installer Call Centre (as per section 2) and tell them you have damaged the pipeline and switched off the pump.

**Step 3:** Minimise the amount of wastewater discharged into the wastewater collection system until repairs are carried out.

**Step 4: – Recommence normal operation:** It is probable that wastewater levels will have reached alarm levels when the repairs are affected, in which case you should wait one hour for those levels to clear before notifying any further problems to the relevant Approved Installer Call Centre.

## **5. Council not liable**

Council will not be held liable for any wastewater overflows that may occur within your property. Residents will be responsible for any flows emanating from their property and may be prosecuted for environmental breaches if they have failed to notify the relevant Approved Installer Call Centre. All Approved Installer Call Centre's will record notifications in a database accessible by Council.

