Using your pressure sewer system

Occupier’s manual
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Using this manual

This manual is a guide to the operation and maintenance of the Pressure Sewer System installed on your property.

The system is easy to look after and we strongly recommend that you take a few minutes to familiarise yourself with how it works.

There are some basic things you should know about your Pressure Sewer System. These include:

- how to care for your unit
- what happens if the alarm sounds
- what you should do before going on holidays.

Further information: (03) 5832 4640

Faults and emergencies (24/7): 1800 454 500
What is a pressure sewer system?

Why install a pressure sewer system?
Pressure sewer systems are an economical and environmentally friendly way of collecting, disposing and transporting wastewater from households.

They are often used in areas where the landscape is either very hilly or very flat, in areas which regularly flood or have high water tables, or where a conventional gravity sewer is impractical.

What is a pressure sewer system and how does it work?
A pressure sewer system is made up of a network of fully sealed pipes which are fed by pressure sewer units located at each connected property.

The pressure sewer unit processes the property’s wastewater and transfers it to the street via a pipeline within the property.

The pressure sewer forms part of the wider reticulated sewer network which ultimately transfers the waste to our wastewater facility - this could be kilometres away.

Once installed, the only visible parts of the pressure sewer unit are the tank lid and the controller box.

What components make up a pressure sewer system?
The pressure sewer system on your property is made up of four key elements, as shown in the below diagram.

Who installs a pressure sewer system?
The pressure sewer unit and related electrical connection are installed by a GVW-approved plumber. The property discharge line and property drain installation are the responsibility of the property owner.

1. **Property discharge line (GVW ownership)** | This is a small diameter pipe (not dissimilar to a large sprinkler system pipe) which connects the pressure sewer unit to the boundary valve kit.

2. **Boundary Valve Kit (GVW ownership)** | Ensures that wastewater which is already in the Pressure Sewer cannot re-enter your property and enables maintenance staff to isolate you from the system in the event of an emergency.

3. **Collection tank/pumping unit (GVW ownership)** | This includes a small pump, storage tank and level monitors which are all installed underground so that only the top of the storage tank (or lid) is visible.

4. **Pump control panel (GVW ownership)** | This is a small box which is mounted to the wall of your house containing all the electrical controls for the pumping unit including both audible and visual alarms. For specific properties, SCADA controls and timers may be required.

5. **Inspection shaft (Property owner ownership)** | This allows access to your drains should there be an internal blockage.

6. **Overflow relief gully (Property owner ownership)** | In the event of a sewer blockage prior to the pumping unit this allows for effluent to overflow outside of the dwelling.

7. **Property service drain (Property owner ownership)** | This is the drainage pipework connecting the discharge from the dwelling to the pump system. It is the responsibility of the property owner to install and maintain this pipework up to the capped inspection opening.

8. **Electrical switchboard (Property owner ownership)** | The switchboard for your electrical supply to the house.
How does a pressure sewer system work?

The main component of the Pressure Sewer System is the pumping unit which is installed on your property. The pumping unit works in the following way:

**STEP 1**
Wastewater enters the storage tank from the household drains (including sinks, toilets, showers, baths etc.).

**STEP 2**
The wastewater level rises above the "pump on" level and the pump automatically turns on.

**STEP 3**
When the wastewater level is reduced below the "pump off" level, the pump automatically turns off.

**STEP 4**
In the event of a power outage or pump failure, the wastewater level may rise above the "alarm level". The audible and visible alarm will automatically be activated. See the section titled "What you need to know about alarms" for further instructions on what to do if the alarm is activated.
What items must not be flushed down your property drains?

To avoid blockages and damage to the pumping unit, the following should NOT be placed into this or any household sewer system:

- cooking oils and fats
- glass
- metal
- seafood shells
- rocks
- nappies, socks, rags or clothes
- chemicals (other than normal domestic products eg. dishwashing powder, disinfectants)
- plastic or wooden objects
- paints (water soluble or oil based)
- sanitary napkins or tampons
- condoms
- kitty litter
- flammable materials (petrol, thinners, turps)
- lubricating oil and/or grease.
- salt water
- stormwater/rainwater.

Why can’t rainwater go into the sewer system?

Pressure sewer systems are only designed to accept property wastewater, not stormwater or rainwater. Rainwater must not be directed into the sewerage system for the following reasons:

- it will increase the costs of pumping for you;
- it can lead to alarms being activated
- in extreme situations, the pumping unit may overflow.

If the alarm regularly activates during or after rainfall, you should contact Goulburn Valley Water.

Why must I keep heavy weights off the lid of the pumping unit?

The lid of the storage tank is not strong enough to withstand the weight of very heavy objects (greater than 500 kilograms). As a guide, the following items should be kept off the lid:

- cars and other vehicles
- ride-on lawn mowers.

If the property owner causes damage to the lid of the storage tank, the customer may be responsible for meeting the cost of any repairs.
Troubleshooting your pressure sewer system

Why has my alarm activated?
There are a number of reasons as to why your alarm may be activated.
The following table provides you with a guide of what to do.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SYMPTOM</th>
<th>WHAT TO DO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alarm sounds</td>
<td>&gt;&gt; Press the button on the underside of the control unit to disable the audible alarm. This audible alarm will only operate for 10 minutes regardless of whether the button on the underside of the control unit pressed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flashing light</td>
<td>&gt;&gt; The flashing light will only turn off if one of our representatives resets it or if the problem which triggered the alarm is rectified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power outage</td>
<td>&gt;&gt; If the alarm sounds immediately after a power failure, please wait one hour after power has been restored before calling Goulburn Valley Water on 1800 454 500 to report the problem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt;&gt; Once power is restored please allow one hour for the pumping unit to drop the tank level below the alarm limit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt;&gt; The alarm could sound simply because the wastewater may have built up to a high level whilst there has been no power available. You are advised to minimise your wastewater generation during power failures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power outages for longer than 8 hours</td>
<td>&gt;&gt; Take steps to minimise wastewater generation, keep showers brief, wait until the flashing light stops before resuming showering, clothes washing or running the dishwasher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt;&gt; Advise Goulburn Valley Water of any extended power outages as we might have to attend your property to pump the tank out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequent alarms</td>
<td>&gt;&gt; Determine if there has been any sudden inundation to the tank such as a backwash from a swimming pool. If the alarm sounds during or after sudden rainfall there may be rainwater entering the tank.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt;&gt; Should the problem continue occurring please contact Goulburn Valley Water on 1800 454 500 so that we can attend and investigate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officer attends</td>
<td>&gt;&gt; Please ensure clear access to the pumping unit and control box as transportation of a faulty pump may be required.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Extensions, landscaping, gardens and pools

Extensions to your home
If you are extending your building, you must contact Goulburn Valley Water to seek advice on the suitability of your existing pumping unit prior to the commencement of any construction activities.

Moving the pumping unit will be dependent on the layout of your land as all wastewater from your house must gravitate into it.

If we approve your application, the costs associated with moving the pumping unit and house service line will be your responsibility. Any changes to the original installation need to be clearly documented and submitted to us to ensure that in the event of an emergency our maintenance staff can locate the key system components.

Property Discharge Line
The property discharge line is a polyethylene sewer pipe which connects the pumping unit on your property to the pressure sewer in the street. It is worth familiarising yourself with the exact location of the property discharge line so that it can be moved (if required) or avoided if work is being done on your property.

The property discharge line can be found using one of the following methods:
- detectable marker tape is buried just above the pipeline and can be located by your builder
- if your builder cannot detect the tape, contact us on 1800 454 500 and an officer will peg the line for you at a cost.

Bungalows or other dwellings on your property
It may be possible for your pumping unit to service both the main and additional dwellings on your property, depending on the layout of your land.

Please contact us for advice in relation to this matter.

Landscaping
Landscaping over the property discharge line is permitted, please keep in mind that if repairs are required, you will be responsible for the costs of any reinstatement works to repair any damage caused.

The storage tank lid and boundary valve kit must not be covered by any landscaping works. You must also ensure that sufficient space is left around each of these components to enable our maintenance staff to access them if required.

Garages, car parks, decking and garden sheds
Garages, car parks, decking and garden sheds are not to be built over the pumping unit or boundary valve kit. Goulburn Valley Water approval is required to build any of these structures over the house service line.

Installing a swimming pool or large spa
Installing a swimming pool or large spa can result in large amounts of water being discharged quickly to the pumping unit during activities such as backwashing filters or emptying.

In some cases, the pumping unit may not be able to cope with this and the alarm may activate or the pumping unit may even overflow.

This could include upgrading from the standard pump unit and installation of dual pumps, larger well or storage tank. Any costs associated with an upgrade from the standard unit are to be borne by the property owner.

Please contact us for advice in relation to this matter.
Pumping unit maintenance, warranties, repairs

What happens if my pumping unit needs to be repaired?
Pumping units are generally simple. In most cases, maintenance staff will be able to make immediate repairs to your pumping unit. If the problem is more serious, your pumping unit may be replaced immediately or taken back to our workshop for repairs.

See below for our guidelines on what to do.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>System Part</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>What will we do?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Pumping Unit</td>
<td>&gt;&gt; Contact us on 1800 454 500</td>
<td>&gt;&gt; We will carry out repairs to all points of the Pressure Sewer System.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt;&gt; Property owners will not incur any cost for repairs which result from normal wear and tear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt;&gt; A replacement pump will be inserted into the storage tank if the existing pump requires significant repairs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sewer or Pump Repairs</td>
<td>&gt;&gt; Minimise wastewater</td>
<td>&gt;&gt; If repairs are required to the Pressure Sewer or pumping unit, you should minimise wastewater until repairs are completed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boundary Valve Kit Repairs</td>
<td>&gt;&gt; Do not access the boundary valve kit yourself. Contact us on 1800 454 500 and wait for our officer to arrive.</td>
<td>&gt;&gt; We will operate the valves in your boundary valve kit if required. Under no circumstances should owners open or tamper with the valves inside the boundary kit.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pumping unit servicing
The average pumping unit only requires servicing once every eight years. Please report any pumping unit faults to Goulburn Valley Water on 1800 454 500.

Pressure sewer bursts
If you notice wet ground or water escaping from your plumbing, it is possible that a burst may have occurred.

Such breaks are rare and are more likely to occur due to other works being carried out near the pipes.

If you become aware of such a fault please contact Goulburn Valley Water immediately on 1800 454 500.

Pumping unit warranty
Only our licenced representatives can carry out repairs on the pumping unit.

Work by others that was not authorised by Goulburn Valley Water in writing may void warranties and you may become liable for future costs.

Pumping unit replacement
If the pumping unit requires replacement you will not be required to meet any of the cost.
The only exception to this rule is if you have:
- emptied substances into the pumping unit which are banned
- accessed the pumping unit. The storage tank lid must remain sealed at all times
- interfered with the house service line or boundary valve kit
- blocked off the vents to the storage tank by covering it over.
If you’re away from home

If you are going on holidays for more than three days, your pumping unit will need to be flushed out to prevent potential odour problems.

It is suggested that you complete the following activities before going away:

Flush the system
Run at least 190 litres of water into your household drains in order to activate the pressure sewer pump. This can be achieved by filling a bathtub and then emptying it, or doing a couple of loads of washing and using the shower just prior to going on holiday.

Always keep the power to the pumping unit on
If there are any leaking taps or appliances within your household, there may be a small accumulation of wastewater in the storage tank. If the pumping unit is turned off, it could potentially overflow and there would be no audible or visible alarm to warn you or your neighbours of the problem.

If you fail to clean your system before going on holidays and we have to flush out your storage tank in response to complaints from residents in the area, you may be required to pay for the cost of this work.
1. Consent to Connection
The consent of Goulburn Valley Region Water Corporation (GVW) to connect the Property to the sewerage system pursuant to Section 145 of the Water Act 1989 is subject to:
1.1 These Terms and Conditions for Connection (Terms and Conditions).
1.2 In respect of the Property, the Owner, other details and subject to any special requirements, detailed in the Consent Notice attached (Consent Notice) which forms part of these Terms and Conditions.
1.3 That the Terms and Conditions of this consent are binding on the Owner and on future owners of the Property.
1.4 Connection via a Pressure Sewer System (PSS) which means the pressure sewer system shown in the User Manual including the pumping unit, control panel, electrical cables, capped inspection opening, boundary valve kit, storage tank, internal sewer rising main and associated pipes.
1.5 The Property Owner must submit an “Application for Connection – Pressure Sewer System” to GVW.
1.6 Upon approval, GVW will issue a “Consent Notice for Connection – Pressure Sewer System” to the Property Owner.

2. Other Relevant Documents/Agreements
Incorporated in these Terms and Conditions (as applicable) are:
2.1 The GVW Customer Charter for residential customers or business customers.
2.2 The obligations set out in the User Manual for Pressure Sewer adopted by GVW as applying from time to time (available on GVW’s website).
2.3 Any applicable Australian Standards and Water Services Association of Australia Standards.
2.4 Any Trade Waste Agreement, Developer Construct Agreement or Agreements under Section 173 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 and Section 17(2)(c) of the Subdivision Act 1988 made with GVW applying to the Owner or the Property.

3. Property Drain
The Owner must arrange a licensed plumber (at the Owner’s cost) to install or alter the property drain for connection to the PSS to GVW’s satisfaction. The Owner is responsible for the cost of the works in accordance with these Terms and Conditions.

4. Installation
4.1 The Owner must arrange to install a PSS of a system make, brand or type (including all its constituent components) to the satisfaction of GVW. This detail will be set out in the Consent Notice.
4.2 The PSS control panel must be mounted on the side of a building on the Property or other structure suitable to GVW and is to be connected to the electrical power supply to the Owner’s Property.
4.3 The isolation valve in the boundary connection kit is not to be opened until GVW has issued a Compliance Notice for Pressure Sewer System and approved connection.

5. Property Service Plan
Prior to connection, the Owner must arrange for a licensed plumber (at the Owner’s cost) to lodge a property service plan for approval by GVW specifying the location of all infrastructures, including:
5.1 Location of the pump unit, control box, interconnecting cables and boundary valve kit.
5.2 Alignment of the internal sewer rising main.

6. Ownership and Occupation
6.1 After approval and connection of the PSS to the Corporation’s reticulated system, GVW will own the PSS.
6.2 The Owner will continue to own the property drain.
6.3 The Owner must ensure any occupier of the Property is aware of the existence of the PSS and a copy of these Terms and Conditions and the User Manual are provided. The Owner remains liable for all aspects of these Terms and Conditions and the User Manual regardless of the occupation of the Property by any other party.

7. Maintenance and Damage
7.1 The Owner must arrange to maintain the property drain and keep it in good working order. Any work on the property drain must be carried out by a licensed plumber (at the Owner’s cost).
7.2 GVW will maintain the PSS.
7.3 The Owner must ensure GVW is promptly advised of any alarms (including power failures) or faults with the pump unit control panel or electrical cables and pipes on GVW’s side of the inspection opening. The GVW emergency and faults 24 hour telephone number is 1800 454 500.
7.4 The Owner is responsible for protecting the PSS. Any damage to the PSS is to be reported to GVW for repair by GVW at the Owner’s cost.
7.5 The Owner must allow GVW staff to enter the Property to maintain the PSS system as required.
8. Power
The Owner is responsible for paying for the power consumption of the PSS.

9. Pools and Spas or Increase in Discharge Flowrate
If the Property includes a pool or spa, or any other property improvements, which discharges water at more than 0.5 litres per second to the PSS, the Owner must limit the flow by installing any of the following:

9.1 An intermediate holding tank.
9.2 A duplex pump arrangement.
9.3 A flow limiting valve.
9.4 Other device.

Such installation must be carried out to the satisfaction of GVW by a licensed plumber (at the Owner’s cost).

10. Restricting Water Use
10.1 In any case where the Owner discovers a fault with the PSS (including any power failure) or the Owner’s property drain, the Owner must restrict as much as possible the amount of water that is discharged to the Owner’s property drain.

10.2 The Owner must only discharge appropriate waste into the PSS that will not damage the PSS, the pump unit or other GVW infrastructure. The cost of any repairs caused by discharging inappropriate waste material through the PSS must be paid by the Owner.

The Owner must ensure that a copy of the User Manual and Terms and Conditions are kept at the Property at all times, even if the Property is leased or rented.

12. Decommissioning Old Systems
When the PSS is installed, the Owner must arrange for a licensed plumber (at the Owner’s cost) to decommission any existing waste water system, in accordance with any Environment Protection Authority and other regulatory requirements for such work.

13. Selling the Owner’s Property
These Terms and Conditions and the User Manual must be brought to the attention of any prospective purchaser of the Property by the Owner.

14. Costs and Charges
14.1 The Owner is responsible for the costs of purchasing the PSS, installing the PSS and GVW’s associated administrative costs.

14.2 The Owner must meet all sewerage service and usage charges which apply to the Property.

14.3 The Owner must meet all costs incurred by and charges levied by GVW in respect of the repair or replacement of the PSS where this is necessary as a result of damage caused either intentionally or negligently by the Owner.

14.4 The Owner must meet any New Customer Contribution charges and any applicable connection fees at the time of connection.

14.5 The Owner must gain approval from GVW to relocate any components of the PSS on the Property and then only by an approved licensed plumber (at the Owner’s cost).

15. Procedure for Payment - Existing Works Charge Paid
If the cost for installation of the PSS has already been paid to GVW as a charge in respect of the development of the Property then:

15.1 Prior to connection, the Owner must arrange and provide GVW with a quote for the installation of the PSS from a licenced experienced Plumber. If the quote is acceptable, GVW will advise the Owner. If GVW requires further quotes, the Owner agrees to obtain them. GVW will raise a Purchase Order and submit to the approved contractor for supply.

15.2 The invoice (including reference to the Purchase Order) for the installation of the PSS is to be forwarded to GVW together with the As Constructed Drainage Plan prepared by the approved contractor for the installation of the PSS.

16. Procedure for Payment - Existing Works Charge Not Previously Paid
If the cost for installation of the PSS has not already been paid to GVW as a charge in respect of the development of the Property then:

16.1 Any invoice in respect of the design, materials or installation of the PSS which may be payable by GVW must be paid by the Owner, either through GVW or direct to any party rendering the invoice, and within 7 days of providing the invoice to the Owner.

16.2 Within 7 days of receiving notice from GVW to do so, the Owner must make payment of any amounts payable pursuant to Clause 16.1 plus an additional 30% to cover GVW’s internal administration costs.

17. Odour Control
Any relevant feasibility reports required by GVW must address the generation of odour from the PSS in order to mitigate odours to GVW’s satisfaction (at the Owner’s cost).

18. Flow Meters
The Owner agrees to install flow meter(s) on the discharge from:

all commercial and large residential developments to GVW’s satisfaction any sewer rising main that is greater than 1km in length and discharges directly into a sewerage pump station.
19. Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) Monitoring

If GVW requires, the Owner agrees to install an authority approved telemetry system as defined in the corporations Preferred Equipment List and Design guidelines to provide a communication link into GVW's SCADA, to GVW's satisfaction.

20. Easement

If GVW requires, the Owner agrees to set aside on the plan of subdivision or to create any easements over the Property in favour of GVW in relation to the PSS, to GVW's satisfaction.

21. Non-Compliance with Terms and Conditions

Any breach of these Terms and Conditions by the Owner or any occupant of or visitor to the Property, without limiting the remedies available to GVW, will allow GVW to do any or all of the following:

21.1 Require the Owner to take specified actions to remedy the breach.

21.2 Refuse to accept discharges from the PSS into GVW's reticulated sewer system until the breach is remedied.

21.3 Exercise any powers available to GVW under the Water Act 1989.

21.4 Revoke GVW's consent for the connection pursuant to Section 145 of the Water Act 1989 and disconnect the PSS.