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SDCC Private Foul Treatment System Pre Planning Guidance

Planning permissions requiring Private Foul Drainage systems need to provide for protection of the environment and comply with all pollution control requirements. The following guidance on Private Foul Drainage Systems should be adhered to:

1. Ideally in an urban area the applicant for permission should firstly attempt to connect to a public sewer and avoid the use of a septic tank. If connection to a public sewer is not an option then the alternative is a septic tank or private treatment system installed on site with a percolation bed.
2. Applicants for permission should be familiar with the EPA Code of Practice regarding sewage treatment systems for single dwellings which is at this link <http://www.epa.ie/water/wastewater/guidance/cop/#.VksdvNLhDcs>
3. Wastewater legislation for single houses and the Regulation of domestic wastewater treatment systems is available from the following link <http://www.epa.ie/water/wastewater/legislation/#.VksdktLhDcs>
4. As a first you should see if you meet the minimum separation distances - in particular Figure 6.2 and Table 6.1 in the code of practice [and possible the appendices] available at this link <http://www.epa.ie/pubs/advice/water/wastewater/code%20of%20practice%20for%20single%20houses/Code%20of%20Practice%20Introduction%202010.pdf>. In designing an on-site domestic wastewater treatment system to treat and dispose of the wastewater, three factors should be considered:
 - Are there any restrictions relating to the site?
 - Is the site suitable to treat the wastewater? (Attenuation)
 - Is the site able to dispose of the wastewater volumes? (Hydraulic load)

Characterising the site involves a number of stages and should include:

- A desk study, which collects information available on maps, etc., about the site
 - On-site assessment: A visual assessment of the site defining the site in relation to surface features
 - A trial hole to evaluate the soil structure, mass characteristics such as preferential flow paths, depth to bedrock and water table
 - Percolation tests that give an indication of the permeability of the subsoil
5. If you can achieve the minimum distances then you need to have the ground tested to see if it can properly soak and treat any liquids [effluent] from the septic tank and this will have to be assessed by a trained assessor. A helpful website may be <http://www.iowa.ie> which is the Irish on-site wastewater association which purports to represent professional assessors.
 6. An assessor should be availed of to test the site. This will provide a site suitability report on the suitability of the ground to cope with a septic tank or treatment system and of particular interest is the 'T-value' determined by the test. The services of an assessor that is independent and not linked to any company or person selling septic tanks or treatment systems should be considered. This will ensure you get truly independent advice.
 7. If the site meets the requirements then you will need to decide the type of system to use and in most cases, depending on ground conditions, a septic tank and percolation bed will suffice and is likely to be acceptable to the Council;
 8. Once you decide on the type of treatment system to use then you will have to apply for planning permission supplying relevant information and drawings etc.;
 9. If planning permission is granted and the system is installed then you will need to register the tank at the website <https://www.protectourwater.ie/>