Septic Tanks & Wastewater Systems when buying or selling a house

What you need to consider about the septic tank or wastewater system.



If you are buying or selling a house that has a private wastewater system (including a septic tank) installed on the site, there is information about the system that it is important for you to know. The following checklist will help you to find out what you need to know about the system, which will help to ensure the system is efficient, safe and complies with local planning policies and regulations.

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Buying or selling a house checklist

Ask	Why is this important to know?	✔
Is there a wastewater system serving the house?	Each house needs to have a system to treat effluent and wastewaters generated.	
Is the system registered?	The owner is required to have their system registered.	
Where is the wastewater system located?	This helps with checking and maintaining the system.	
Is the wastewater system located within the boundary of the site or on a third party's land?	This has implications for access and maintenance.	
Is the wastewater system fit for purpose?	The owner is responsible for having a system that is properly working.	
Is the wastewater system being maintained?	The owner is responsible for maintaining the system and keeping records of maintenance.	

What type of well is it and how was the well constructed?	This is important so the well can be protected, checked and maintained.	
Is there evidence of desludging of the wastewater system or a receipt from an authorised contractor? This information should be kept for 5 years.	This is the law.	
Can the seller provide information on the wastewater system including the percolation area? (The type, size, location, maintenance, desludging certs, and so on.)	It could add to your costs so check if the system is fit for purpose.	
Do I need to get the system assessed to find out if improvement or upgrade works (minor or major) are needed?	It could add to your costs so check if the system is fit for purpose.	
Has an inspection of the wastewater system been done in line with the Domestic Wastewater Assessment programme?	This means a Certificate of Compliance has been issued showing the system complies with the Water Services Act, or an Advisory Notice has been served meaning work is needed to satisfy the Water Services Act.	
Is there an Advisory Notice on the wastewater system?	This means work is needed to satisfy the Water Services Act before a Certificate of Compliance can be issued.	
Is the water supply from a public water supply, a group water scheme or a private supply such as a well?	There needs to be a potable (drinkable) water supply.	

Is there a potable (drinkable) water supply on the site and is it fit for purpose?	There needs to be a potable water supply.	
Where is the well located on the site?	This is important so the well can be protected, checked and maintained.	
Is there treatment provided on the well?	This is important so the well can be protected, checked and maintained.	
Are there water-testing results available to verify the quality of the water? For more information see www.epa.ie/water/dw/hhinfo/protprivwell/	This is important so the well can be protected, checked and maintained.	
You should also:		
Check your local authority website for further guidance on septic tank system requirements	Requirements may vary across different local authorities.	
Check and update the register at www.protectourwater.ie with new information if you are the new owner.	The owner is required to have their system registered.	
Check the EPA Code of Practice 2009 document for guidance and advice if upgrade works or replacement is required. Refer to the Local Authority Planning Section for guidance and advice also.	This ensures that any works done comply with current requirements.	

The Law

The law states that the owner of a domestic waste water treatment system will be responsible for system maintenance and renewal and must ensure that its parts and components are fit for purpose, operational where appropriate and kept in good order and repair so as to prevent a risk to human health or the environment.





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You can find more information in the EPA Code of Practice: Waste Water Treatment Systems for Single Houses at www.epa.ie/water/wastewater/info/

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waters & communities

Geological Survey