The [Water Services (Amendment) Act 2012](http://www.environ.ie/en/Legislation/Environment/Water/FileDownLoad%2C29427%2Cen.pdf) provided for the introduction of a registration and national inspection system for domestic waste water treatment systems (septic tanks).

The key objectives are:

* To enhance and protect public health and the environment which will, in turn, benefit rural dwellers in terms of a better quality of life and better quality water.
* To protect our environment. This will also have positive economic benefits for the tourism, recreation, agricultural and food-producing sectors, all of which rely on clean water.

**Septic Tank Registration**

For more information and to Register online go to <https://www.protectourwater.ie/>

Further information also available at: <http://www.epa.ie/water/wastewater/info/>

**Information for Owners of Domestic Waste-Water Treatments Systems (DWWTS):**

Owners of domestic waste water treatment systems need to:

* Know where their septic tank is located
* Operate and maintain the system so it is fit for purpose and fully operational
* Ensure that the system cannot pollute the environment by discharging or leaking wastewater anywhere it is not supposed to, that is, onto the ground or into any water source
* Ensure that roof water or surface water run-off cannot enter a domestic waste water treatment system
* De-sludge the system at intervals appropriate to the tank capacity and the number of people resident in the premises connected to it, or as recommended by the system’s manufacturer.
* De-sludging should be carried out by an authorised contractor. You should keep the receipt from the contractor for 5 years.

**Desludging and Maintenance**

Systems should be de-sludged regularly and by a contractor holding a Waste Collection Permit for this purpose.  Details can be checked at the National Waste Collection Permit Office (NWCPO) Tel.: 0579357428 or on their website at [**https://www.nwcpo.ie/permitsearch.aspx**](https://www.nwcpo.ie/permitsearch.aspx)

Once on the website, Simply carry out a 'quick search' for 'Septic Tank de-sludging' and choose 'Wicklow County' for a list of approved contractors to carry out this work.

The EPA in conjunction with the Network of Ireland’s Environmental Compliance and Enforcement (NIECE) Working Group on Engagement have produced information leaflets on septic tank systems.

* [**Download: Is**](https://www.cavancoco.ie/%21NYPQOX) **your well at risk from your septic tank**
* [**Download: What**](https://www.cavancoco.ie/%21DAC18O) **you need to know about your septic tank**
* **Download : What to expect from a septic tank inspection**

**Grant Applications for Septic Tanks**

The Environment Section of Wicklow County Council administers three types of Grants for Homeowners upgrading their septic tanks:

Grants are available under the following schemes:

* (National Inspection Plan)
* (Prioritised Areas for Action under the RBMP)
* (High Status Objective Catchment Areas under the RBMP)
1. All three grant schemes cover 85% of the costs associated with upgrade works but the grant will not exceed €5,000.
2. Homeowners are only eligible for a grant if they registered their wastewater system within the legal timeframes: **Homeowners had to register their wastewater system with protectourwater.ie by the 1st of February 2013.**

**Homeowners installing septic tanks after 1st of February 2013 had to have registered their systems within 90 days of completing the connection of the premises to the system**.

• The grants only apply to the homeowner’s primary residence – not second homes or holiday homes.

• Original receipts are required for any works carried out and works can only be carried out by a tax compliant contractor.

• Grants do not apply to maintenance or de-sludging of wastewater systems.

**Below are the three instances where a homeowner can apply for a grant under these schemes to upgrade their septic tank.**

1. **Grants under the National Inspection Plan:** Applies to homeowners countywide whose wastewater treatment systems are inspected by the Council under the EPA’s National Inspection Plan:

**a.** Homeowners cannot request an inspection because homes are selected based on EPA pollution risk maps of the County.

**b.** If you are selected for an inspection, you will be given 10 days notice of an inspection and provided with an info pack and what to expect.

 **c.** A homeowner who fails the inspection will be issued an advisory notice listing the items to be corrected within a set timeframe.

 **d.** Homeowners can apply to the Council for a grant to assist with costs associated with the upgrade provided the application includes a recommendation from a suitably qualified professional detailing the proposed upgrade to fix the fault.

2**. Grants in High Status Water Catchments:** Applies to homeowners living in River Catchments designated under the current National River Basin Management Plan for protecting or restoring the highest water quality:

**a.** Homeowners can use the link below to see if they live within a High Status River Catchment by typing their Eircode into the search box https://housinggovie.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=17278d05d4 8e4495a7c47c1bb5443ef5

**b.** Homeowners living within a High Status River Catchments, once confirmed by the Council, can apply for a grant to upgrade faulty or malfunctioning domestic wastewater systems, provided the application includes a recommendation from a suitably qualified professional detailing the fault and the proposed upgrade to fix the fault.

 **c.** It is the homeowner’s responsibility to check if planning permission is required for any upgrade works.

**d.** Where the total cost of the upgrade is less than €750, no grant is payable

**e.** It is for the homeowner to self-identify and then to apply for this grant, as the Councils only involve is to verify that any approved works have been completed

3. **Grants in Priority Areas for Action**: Applies to homeowners living in River Catchments designated as priority areas for investigating water quality issues under the current National River Basin Management Plan:

 **a.** Homeowners identified as having domestic wastewater systems that potentially pose a risk to water as a result of catchment investigations in these areas will be given a referral letter from LAWPRO(Local Authority water Programme) inviting them to apply to the Council for a grant to upgrade their system.

 **b.** Once a referral letter is received, Homeowners can then apply for a grant to the Council to upgrade faulty or malfunctioning domestic wastewater systems, provided the application includes a recommendation from a suitably qualified professional detailing the fault and the proposed upgrade to fix the fault.

**c.** It is the homeowner’s responsibility to check if planning permission is required for any upgrade works.

**d**. Where the total cost of the upgrade is less than €750, no grant is payable If none of these circumstances apply to you but your septic tank system is malfunctioning you should contact an engineering company or a company that specialises in domestic wastewater systems to have the system assessed and corrective actions recommended. There is no grant available for any upgrade works carried out and it is the homeowner’s responsibility to check if planning permission is required for any upgrade works.

**Useful Links**

[**Code of Practice for Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems (Population Equivalent ≤ 10)**](https://www.epa.ie/publications/compliance--enforcement/waste-water/2021-code-of-practice-for-domestic-waste-water-treatment-systems.php) **2021**

[**Building Regulations (Technical Guidance Document H - Drainage and Waste Water Disposal)**](https://www.housing.gov.ie/housing/building-standards/tgd-part-h-drainage-and-waste-water-disposal/technical-guidance-3)