AFTER THE INSPECTION

- If the inspection shows that the treatment system is working properly, you will receive a copy of a report confirming compliance in the post.
- If this is the case, keep up the good work in operating and maintaining your treatment system!
- If the inspection finds problems, the inspector will tell you immediately.
- You will receive a copy of a report with an Advisory Notice within 21 days of the inspection which will:
  - inform you that the DWWTS poses a risk to human health or the environment;
  - inform you that your DWWTS contravenes regulations.
  - inform you of the reasons for that opinion;.
  - and direct you to remedy the matters specified in the notice by a specified date.
- You may be required to seek expert technical advice in order to comply with the Advisory Notice.
- You may seek to have your DWWTS re-inspected for a fee of €20. This may result in The Advisory Notice being confirmed, amended or cancelled.
- In certain circumstances, and for valid reasons, you may be granted a time extension by the local authority for completion of remedial works...
- You may be eligible for a grant to assist with the cost of fixing any problems identified during the inspection.

FURTHER INFO

- You can find out more information on how to maintain your wastewater treatment system from the leaflet entitled "What You Need to Know about Your Septic Tank" (available from your local authority or **www.protectourwater.ie**).
- For information on how to ensure your drinking water is safe, see the leaflet entitled "Is Your Well at Risk from Your Septic Tank" (available from your local authority or **www.protectourwater.ie**).
- Always ensure if having works carried out to your system as a result of an inspection or otherwise that a reputable and competent contractor is used.
- If you are concerned that your well may be contaminated or vulnerable, you should get it tested. For advice on getting your well water tested contact your local authority or HSE Environmental Health Officer.
- For more information about any of the issues in these leaflets contact your local authority or **www.epa.ie**.

Comhshaol, Pobal agus Rialtas Áitiúil
Environment, Community and Local Government

epa
Environmental Protection Agency
An Ghníomhaireacht um Chaomhnú Comhshaoil

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM A SEPTIC TANK INSPECTION

INTRODUCTION

- About one-third of all houses (500,000) in Ireland rely on a domestic wastewater treatment system (DWWTS) to collect, treat and discharge their wastewater. Septic tanks are one type of DWWTS.
- When not designed or operated properly, DWWTSs may contaminate our domestic wells or water sources.
- Contaminated water from DWWTSs can carry pathogens (bacteria/germs/bugs) and harmful chemicals that can cause serious illness and damage to the environment.
- Ponding of wastewater and contamination of soil around septic tanks can pose public health risks.



WHY INSPECTIONS?

- We all care about the quality of our water and its impact on our health, the economy and the environment. For this reason, the Government has introduced legislation that provides for inspections of domestic wastewater treatment systems.
- Identifying and remediating (correcting) failing systems is in everybody's interest, particularly those at risk of having their drinking water supply contaminated.
- Under the *Water Services Act 2007* (as amended), the EPA has appointed inspectors to inspect DWWTSs so that they do not pose a threat to our health or the environment.
- The Local Authorities have been tasked with carrying out these inspections.



WILL I BE INSPECTED?

- Anyone with a DWWTS – this includes septic tanks, packaged plants, tertiary treatment units and associated discharge or infiltration areas – may be inspected by their local authority.
- Not every DWWTS will be inspected. Inspections are allocated according to area risk-assessments, i.e. more inspections will be done where risk to health and the environment is higher and fewer where the risk is lower.
- If you are selected for inspection, you will receive a letter from your local authority advising you of this and giving you at least ten working days' notice.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR AN INSPECTION

- Have your registration certificate available for inspection.
- Know where your wastewater system is. For information on how to locate your septic tank see the leaflet entitled "What You Need to Know About Your Septic Tank" (available from your local authority or **www.protectourwater.ie**).
- Have the details of the contractor if you've had your system de-sludged recently.
- Have any paperwork available relating to installation, maintenance or improvement work carried out, where appropriate.

THE INSPECTION

- When the inspector arrives they will show you their ID card and authorisation, and ask you some basic questions about your system.
- The inspector may look at your registration certificate and other paperwork.
- The inspector will check manholes and pipework for leaks and that there isn't an excess of sludge in the system.
- The drains will be checked to ensure that wastewater and greywater are entering the system where they can be treated, and that roofwater and surfacewater are not entering the tank as that may cause flooding.
- The percolation area will be checked for signs of ponding, as well as nearby ditches and drains for discharge pipes and signs of pollution.
- The system will also be checked for nuisance odours and noise

