Discharging Sewage Effluent to Ground

The regulations governing the discharge of effluent from a septic tank or sewage treatment plant are very simple however the majority of builders and many companies that specialise in the installation od septic tanks and sewage treatment plants routinely install drainage fields (soakaways) that are illegal.

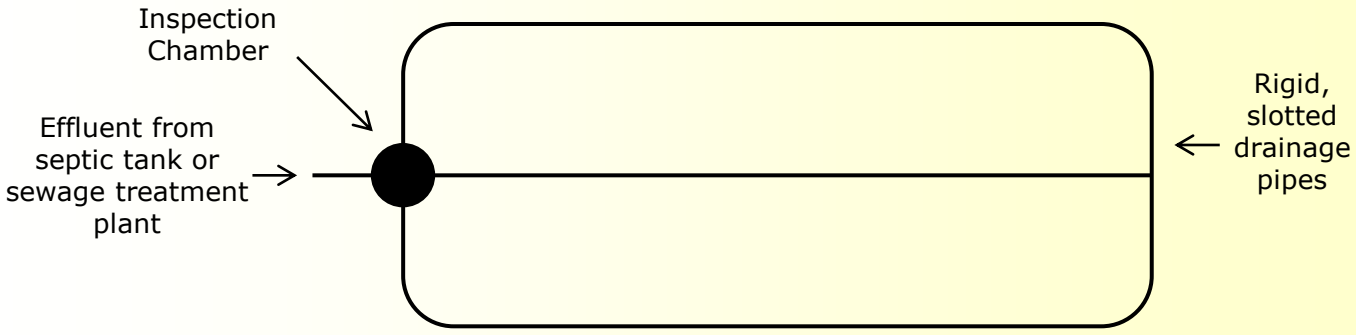
A hole filled with rubble or crates is illegal and always has been

Drainage Field Design

A drainage field (soakaway) for sewage effluent must be a series of rigid, slotted drainage pipes wrapped in 40mm stone and surrounded with a geotextile membrane. It cannot be a hole filled with rubble or crates as used for rainwater, this is illegal for sewage effluent and always has been.

Drainage fields must be constructed in accordance with BS6297 and Building Regulations Section H2

The correct layout for a drainage field for sewage effluent is given below.



Distance From Other Structures

Feature	Distance (m)	
	Building Regulations	BS 6297:2007
Habitable Building	15	7
Watercourse	10	10
Well / Borehole / Spring	50*	-
Site Boundary	-	2

Environment Agency Permits

All sewage effluent discharges, irrespective of size or location, must be registered with the Environment Agency. This also applies to the replacement of existing drainage fields.

Under the new Environment Agency discharge permits a permit exemption can only be obtained for drainage fields serving 11 people or less (2000 litres per day). If a drainage field is to serve more than 11 people then a bespoke permit is required.

Drainage Mounds

In areas of poorly draining ground then a subsurface drainage field is not suitable.

In areas of poorly draining ground with no access to a watercourse a drainage mound may be the only option. This is a specialist structure and should be installed only by experienced contractors.

For sites with clay soils and no running watercourses, drainage mounds are often the only option.

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