

# Sewer ejection pump stations

## Understanding and caring for your pump system

### Your sewerage system

In the Tweed Shire, wastewater (grey water and sewage) from most properties discharges to Council's sewer network via gravity mains. Your property, however, is one of a small number that needs a powered pump station to pump the wastewater from your lot to Council's sewerage system.

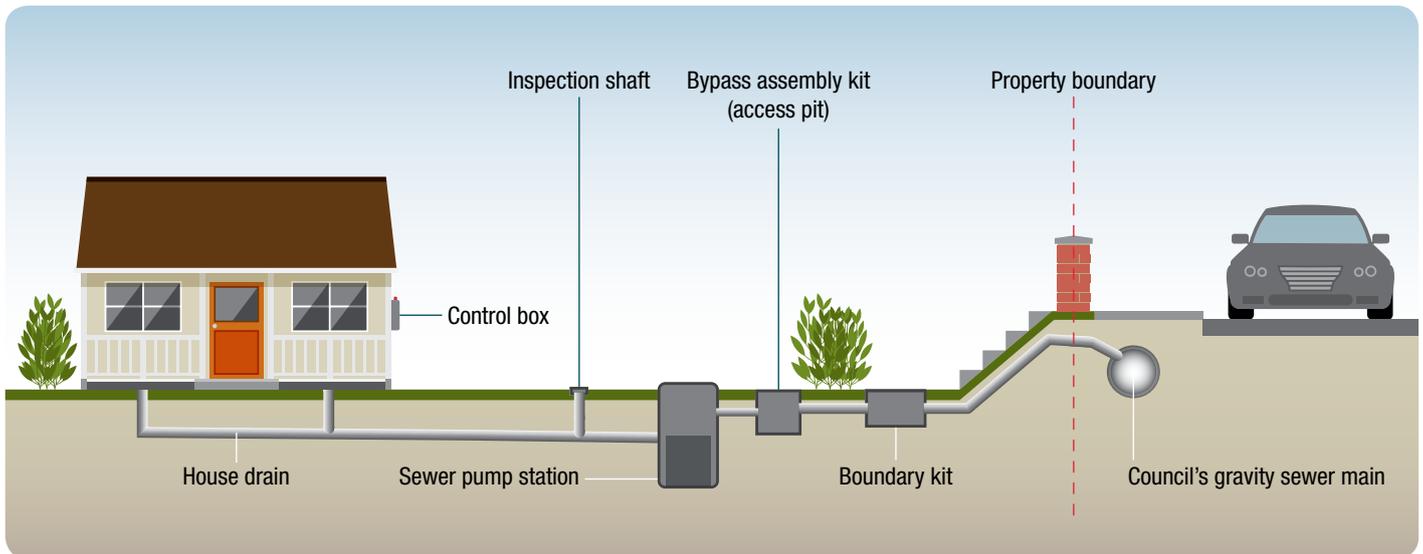


Diagram of a typical pump station connecting an individual property's drainage system to Council's gravity sewer system.

In the Tweed, some pump stations are owned by the property owner and others are owned by Council (Council owned stations are mainly located in Burringbah, Mooball, Azura, Dobby's Crescent and Smiths Creek Road, Uki). If Council owns the station, it maintains the station.\* If the station is privately owned, it is the responsibility of the owner to engage a licensed plumber to service and repair the station if and when required. The property owner also requires a Council approval to operate privately owned pumps.

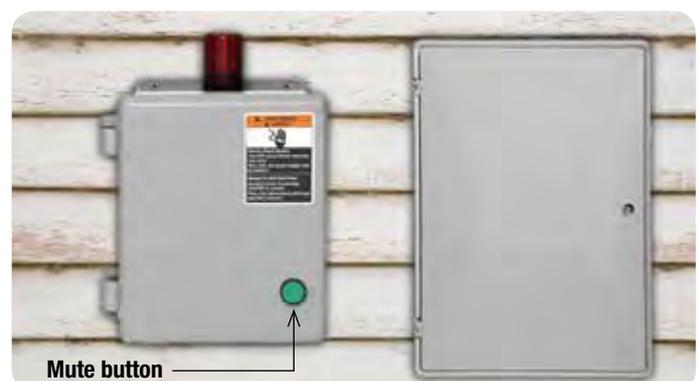
In all cases, it is the property owner's responsibility to maintain property drains, including clearing any blockages. They also need to ensure the lid of the pump station and the pump-out access pit is accessible at all times.

### What is a pump station?

Pump stations are situated below ground, with only the lid and inspection shaft showing. The station comprises a small holding tank and a pump, which is powered by the property's domestic power supply. The pump station has a control box, normally located near your electricity meter box. The control box has an alarm (to alert you to a problem) and a mute button (to silence the alarm).



Only the inspection shaft and lids of the station and access pit are visible above ground. In many cases the access pit lid is purple or black.



The pump station's control box normally is near the electricity meter box.

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### Caring for your sewage ejection pump station

Your pump station is a sensitive piece of equipment. To avoid damage:

- avoid blockages of your property's drains by disposing of all solid waste in a rubbish bin and don't wash kitchen grease down the sink
- never put any of the following items down a sink or toilet:
  - so-called 'flushable' wipes, baby wipes or face wipes
  - cotton buds
  - kitty litter or aquarium sand
  - nappies/disposable nappies
  - socks, rags or cloth
  - plastic objects (toys, utensils etc.)
  - sanitary napkins or tampons
  - glass
  - metal items, such as pins or needles
  - rocks or timber
- keep the inspection shaft, station lid and access pit lid above ground level and sealed to stop stormwater infiltration
- keep all service lids accessible and clear of plants, rocks and general landscaping
- take special care when mowing or whipper-snipping near the lid of the pump station to avoid damaging it (if the lid is damaged or open, sewerage gases could escape).

It is illegal to discharge explosives, flammable materials, strong chemicals, paint, motor oil, grease and fuels to Council's sewerage reticulation network.

*Remember, when calling Council make sure you leave your phone number. A Council employee may need to call you back. Make sure your house number is clearly visible and that the area around your pump station is accessible and free of landscaping.*

### What to do when ...

The alarm goes off:

1. on a privately-owned station, contact your NSW licensed plumber; on a Council-owned station, contact Council on (02) 6670 2400 or 1300 292 872 (after hours)
2. press the mute button
3. keep water usage to a minimum in case there is a blockage and the drains back-up and overflow into your house.

You think you have a blockage:

1. check to see you have power
2. if you have power and the alarm on the station has not sounded, call a licensed plumber (for privately-owned stations) or Council (for Council-owned stations)
3. if in doubt call Council on (02) 6670 2400 or 1300 292 872 (after hours).

Your power goes off:

1. keep water usage to a minimum to avoid a sewage blockage in your house drains.

You're going away (the very last thing to do before leaving):

1. fill a bathtub or laundry sink with water, and
2. pull the plug (to flush your pump station out).