

Septic Tank Pre-Install Checklist

Six stages from ordering your tank to council sign-off — keep your project on track

Use this checklist before you order a septic tank, while you wait for delivery, and on the day your licensed plumber commissions the system. It will save you rework, council headaches and unexpected costs.

Stage 1 — Before you order

- Confirmed dwelling type and bedroom count (1500L suits 1–3 bedrooms).
- Checked council requires a septic, not full AWTs or sewer connection.
- Confirmed property is not on town sewer (call your water utility).
- Identified a licensed plumber/drainier to handle the install.
- Soil and percolation test booked or completed (council usually requires).
- Site sketch drafted with proposed tank and trench position.
- Setbacks verified against council schedule (see our cheat sheet).
- Budget set aside: tank + freight + plumber + excavation + trench + council fees.

Stage 2 — Council approval

- Section 68 / on-site wastewater application lodged with council.
- Plumber's plans and product specification submitted with application.
- Approval letter received in writing — do not excavate before this.
- Inspection appointments understood (usually 1 pre-cover, 1 final).

Stage 3 — Pickup or delivery prep

- Pickup: ute or trailer organised (61kg empty — one-person lift is feasible but two is safer).
- Delivery: clear truck access to drop point, surface firm enough for unloading.
- Tank storage area chosen — out of direct sun, no sharp objects under it.
- Inlet and outlet positions noted from the spec sheet.

Stage 4 — On excavation day

- Hole dimensions match tank footprint plus 200mm clearance all round.
- Base is level, compacted, free of rocks larger than 50mm.
- Bedding sand or gravel layer (75–100mm) placed and screeded.
- Inlet at correct height for gravity feed from dwelling.
- Outlet aligned with planned trench fall (min 1:60 typical).
- No vehicles or heavy machinery driven over trench area.

Stage 5 — Tank placement & connection

- Tank lowered carefully — never dropped or rolled into position.
- Tank filled with water as backfill progresses (prevents floating and flexing).
- Backfill in 300mm layers, compacted, no large stones against the tank wall.
- Inlet & outlet pipes connected and sealed by licensed plumber.
- Risers and access lids set flush with finished surface for pump-out.
- Vent pipe installed back through the dwelling roof line as required.

Stage 6 — Commissioning & sign-off

- Final council inspection passed and certificate received.
- Plumber's compliance certificate filed with property records.
- First pump-out date diarised (typically 3–5 years for 1–2 bedrooms).
- Household briefed: no wipes, no harsh chemicals, no excessive food waste.
- Site map saved showing tank lid, vent and trench locations.

Need a tank? Bush Billabongs supplies 1500L three-chamber polyethylene septic tanks from \$949 AUD with self-service pickup across NSW, QLD and VIC. Visit bushbillabongs.com.au or email info@bushbillabongs.com.au.

This guide is general information only and does not replace professional advice. Always confirm requirements with your licensed plumber and local council.