

National Septic Tank Inspection Report



Stephen McCarthy
Environmental Protection Agency
June 2023

Background

- European Court of Justice case.
- Water Services (Amendment) Act 2012.
- Registration Regulations.
- Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems Regulations.
- Financial Assistance Regulations.



Responsibilities

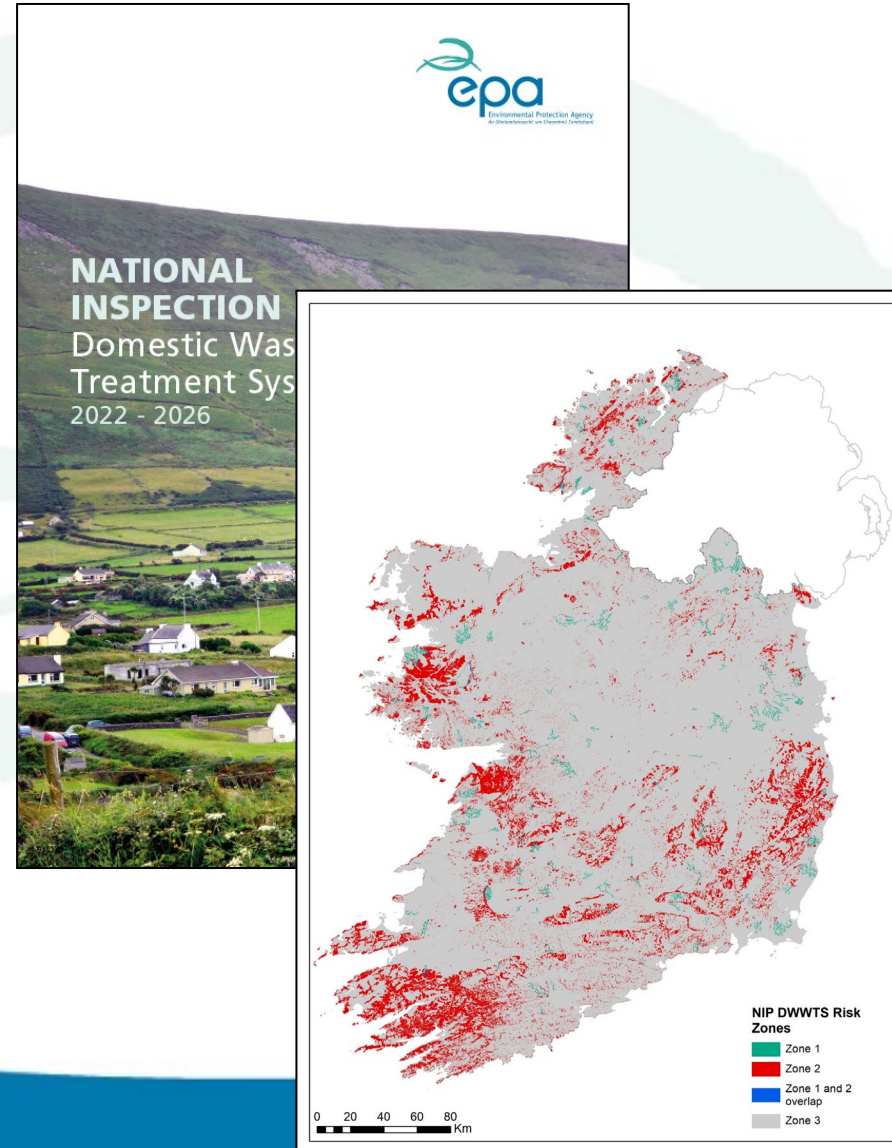
- Owner
 - Register by 01/02/2013.
 - Ensure system is not a risk to 'human health or the environment'.
 - Comply with Regulations.
 - Don't obstruct inspections.
- Water Services Authority (i.e. Council)
 - Take and maintain registrations (protectourwater.ie).
 - WSA Inspectors conduct Inspections.
 - Enforce findings, advisory notices etc.
- EPA
 - Appoints Inspectors.
 - Issues the National Inspection Plan.
 - Supervises WSAs.

Legal requirements

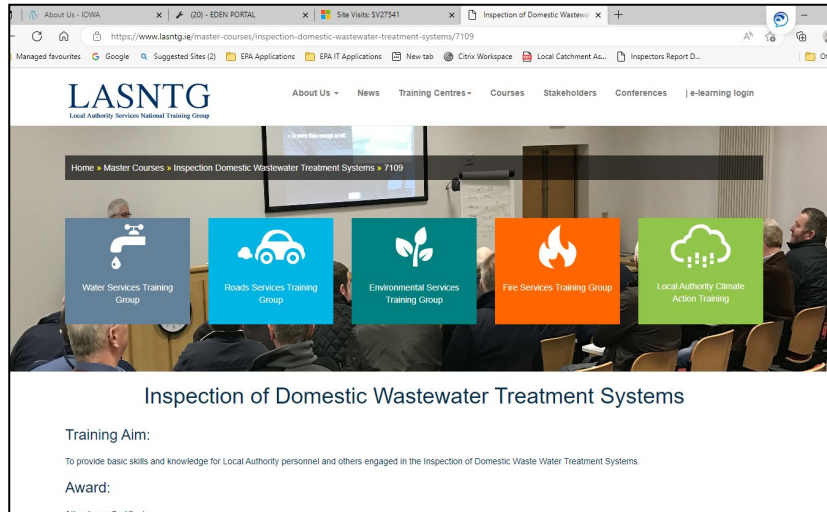
- Not a risk to human health or the environment.
- Does not leak or discharge other than as designed.
- Roof water or surface water does not enter.
- Parts and components are fit for purpose.
- De-sludged at intervals by authorised contractor.
- Keep receipt for five years.

National inspection plan

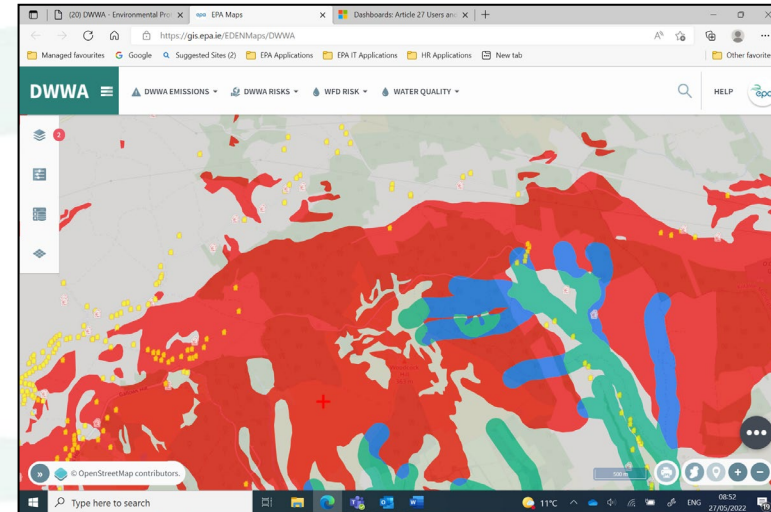
- Septic tanks are a pressure on 9% (148) of at risk waterbodies.
- Risk to groundwater/wells.
- 1,200 inspections/annum minimum.
- Close to rivers where septic tanks are a pressure (6,000).
- In areas with shallow soils and household wells (25,000).



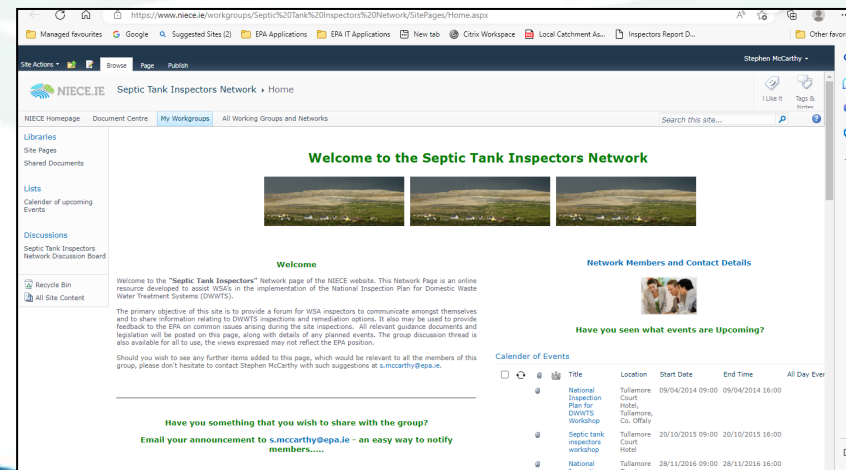
Training and support



The screenshot shows the LASNTG (Local Authority Services National Training Group) website. The main heading is "Inspection of Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems". Below this, there are five colored boxes representing different training groups: Water Services Training Group (blue), Roads Services Training Group (orange), Environmental Services Training Group (green), Fire Services Training Group (red), and Local Authority Climate Action Training (purple). The "Training Aim" is to provide basic skills and knowledge for Local Authority personnel. The "Award" is also mentioned.



The screenshot shows the EPA DWWA (Domestic Wastewater Assessment) GIS map. The map displays various water quality data points across a geographical area, with different colors representing different risk levels or water quality indicators. The interface includes navigation tools and a search bar.



The screenshot shows the NIECE website's "Septic Tank Inspectors Network" page. The page features a welcome message, a "Welcome to the Septic Tank Inspectors Network" heading, and a "Calendar of Events" table. The calendar lists several events, including a National Inspection Court and a Septic Tank Inspectors Workshop.

| Title | Location | Start Date | End Time | All Day Event |
|---------------------------------|--|------------------|------------------|---------------|
| National Inspection Court | Tullamore Court, Tullamore, Co. Offaly | 09/04/2014 09:00 | 09/04/2014 16:00 | |
| Septic Tank Inspectors Workshop | Tullamore Court Hotel | 20/10/2015 09:00 | 20/10/2015 16:00 | |
| National Inspection Court | Tullamore Court | 28/11/2016 09:00 | 28/11/2016 16:00 | |

2022 Report - inspections

- 1,143 inspections.
- 560 (49%) failed.
- 230 (20%) a risk to environment or health.

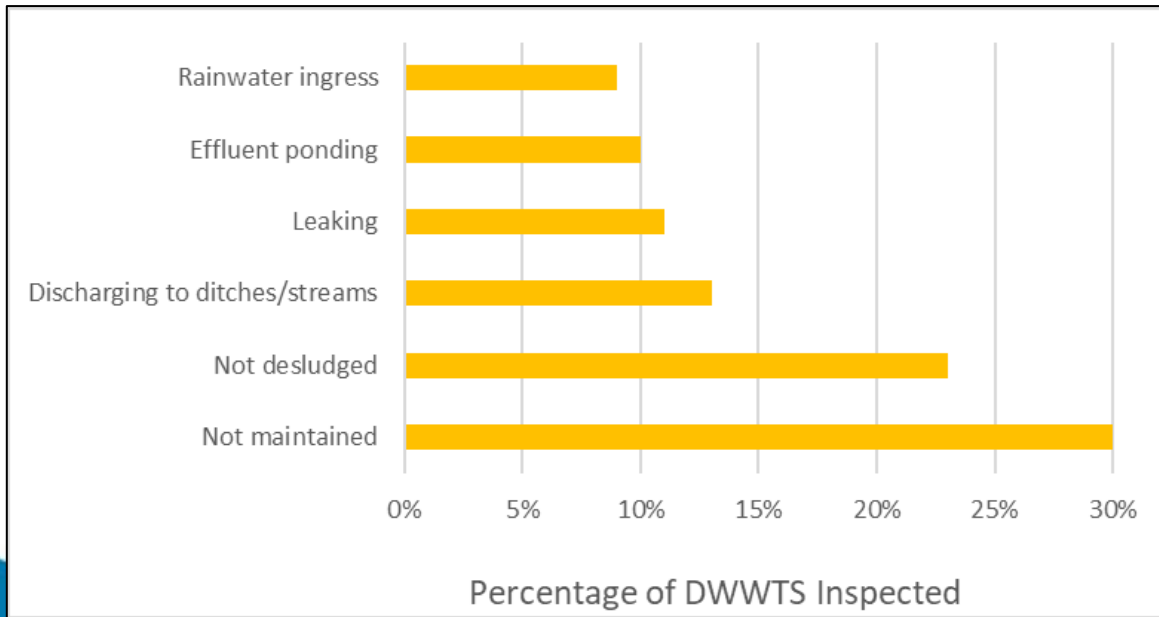
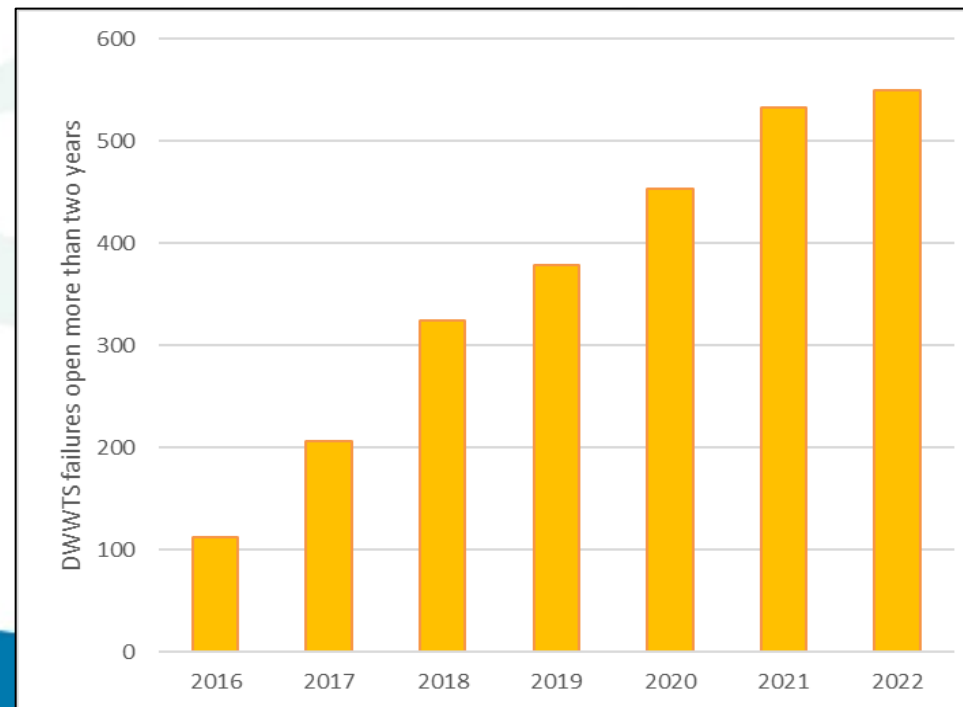


Photo credit: Cork County Council & EPA

2022 Report - enforcement

- 3,983 (78%) of advisory notices closed (2013-2022).
- 550 advisory notices open > 2 years, increasing.
- Half involve sewage ponding or discharging to ditches/streams.
- Inconsistent enforcement - 47 legal actions, 90% by three authorities.
- Follow through on enforcement required by local authorities.
- Grants of 85% of costs up to €5,000.



Engagement

<https://www.epa.ie/environment-and-you/waste-water/>



Have you completed a septic tank system check?

Maintain your wastewater system and you will help to protect your health and local environment.

systemsafe 
check | maintain | protect

Logos at the bottom: Plain English, hi, Environmental Survey, Wonders & Communities, BFE, EPA.



Have you checked your well water supply?

Make sure the water from your well is clean and uncontaminated to protect your family's health.

systemsafe 
Private well protection & maintenance

Logos at the bottom: Plain English, hi, Environmental Survey, Wonders & Communities, BFE, EPA.

WHO – Safely Managed Sanitation

The screenshot shows the OpenWHO.org course interface. The course title is "Assessment tools for use at national and local levels Video". The left sidebar lists the course structure:

- Overview
- Module 1: State of the World's Sanitation
- Module 2: The health rationale and definitions for safely managed sanitation (SMS) in different contexts
- Module 3: Embedding definitions in national policy, standards, regulations and plans
- Module 4: Assessment tools for use at national and local levels
 - Module objectives
 - Assessment tools for use at national and local levels video
 - Knowledge Check
 - Resources
 - Discussions
- Assessment

The main content area shows a video player with a green overlay that reads "Module 4 Assessment tools for use at national and local levels".

The screenshot shows a video player displaying a slide titled "Inspections - National Inspection Plan". The slide features the EPA logo and a photograph of a rural landscape with houses. The text on the slide reads:

Inspections - National Inspection Plan

1,000 inspections/annum minimum (1,200 from 2023)

NATIONAL INSPECTION PLAN
Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems
2022 - 2026

The screenshot shows a video player displaying a slide titled "Benefits". The slide lists five benefits, each preceded by a green checkmark:

- ✓ Risk based approach to sanitation
- ✓ Small but nationally representative samples
- ✓ Links to follow up improvement by households and municipalities
- ✓ Deploys information, incentives and enforcement
- ✓ Strengthens national and local governance and accountability to national and regional regulator

Conclusion

- Inspections
- Enforcement

