

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH FACT SHEET

No. 505

MODULAR LEACH DRAIN CELLS

Modular leach drain cells are often used in absorption trenches for subsurface infiltration of wastewater from septic tanks.

There are a number of proprietary versions of modular drainage cells marketed in the Northern Territory. These cells are generally constructed from black polypropylene with an open matrix construction permitting a void space ratio in excess of 90%. Sizes vary but in general the individual modules are typically 700 mm long x 400 mm wide and 450 mm high. The level of trafficability of the cells depends on the individual design including the number of internal plates.

Modular leach drain cells do not require product approval by the Environmental Health Program. Notwithstanding the manufacturer's installation requirements, installers must comply with following installation requirements:

Cells may be installed side-by-side in absorption trenches, however maximum lengths should not exceed 20 metres.

Base of trench excavation must be level and depth shall not exceed 600 mm.

Cells must be wrapped in the proprietary fabric as per manufacturer's instructions. Wrapping with any other fabric including shade cloth is not permitted.

Trafficable cells must be used on all installations on remote communities and where there is a high likelihood of vehicular traffic over or around the absorption trenches.

Backfill must be structural permeable fill or sand materials, free from lumps and debris. Natural ground is permitted as backfill providing that it has a Design Loading Rate (DLR) of not less than 15, i.e. high/moderate structural loam).

Backfill must be properly compacted.

Trench lengths are calculated by using an effective absorption width comprising "cell width + 2 x height of cell".

Compliance with the provisions of the *Building Act* and Public Health (General Sanitation, Mosquito Prevention, Rat Exclusion and Prevention) Regulations that refers to the *Code of Practice for Small On-site Sewage and Sullage Treatment Systems and the Disposal or Reuse of Sewage Effluent* (the Code), the Administrative Procedures linked to the Code and any amendments to these documents.

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