

In the countryside, there are a variety of elements that are taken into consideration before planning permission is granted. Stables and shelters can often be unsightly or harmful to the appearance of the surrounding environment so your local planning authority will bear this in mind as well as your neighbour's opinions. The decision must also be made in accordance with the local development plan and government policy.

The NPFF (National Planning Policy Framework) aims to promote protection of the environment with new building developments and this will too be considered before planning permission is decided on. Because of this, it is worth showing how your proposed stable block may benefit the local community and economy such as using local traders and materials.

General requirements

General planning permission requirements dictate that stables must be designed and constructed in good quality materials to provide a safe shelter for horses. There are a number of general requirements to protect the safety and wellbeing of the horses.

Stables need natural lighting, and if natural lighting is not available then electrical lighting must be installed safely with no trailing wires that a horse can reach.

The stable should be constructed out of bricks/blocks or wooden partitioning with no snagging points such as protruding nails or anything that could be harmful to the horse. Stable doors should open outwards to provide a safe entrance and exit point.

Good quality materials should be used, designed clearly for the purpose. Metrotile's Aquapan roofing is designed for animal shelters and stables to provide strong and secure protection, and has a 15 year weatherproof guarantee to keep horses safe from extreme weather conditions.

People often ask us about the legal and legislative aspects of having a compost toilet and disposing of, or treating (dealing with) solid and liquid 'waste' outputs from a compost toilet on their land. Because compost toilets are waterless, they are considered to be a very 'green' or environmentally responsible choice, which is certainly true when the outputs are dealt with correctly.

There are some aspects of the whole process to consider carefully, such as making sure the installation meets the current UK Building Regulations, and further more, that the outputs are dealt with legally, responsibly and safely (both for the owner and for the environment) which comes under the Environment Agency (EA) in England and Wales, and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) for Scotland.

Do you need to comply with building regulations? If the toilet is situated in a building that would itself need to comply with building regulations, then you will need to ensure the installation of your compost toilet can meet them (see below, but essentially they determine that there is a method of getting solid waste out of the building that does not take it through a living area). If the toilet is in a small garden room that is exempt from building regulations, then these won't apply to you.

How will you deal with urine? There are several ways of dealing with urine (see our web page covering this in more detail), but for most people, the simplest way is to create a small, dedicated urine soak-away pit. Providing that the discharge is under 10 litres per day and that the discharge point is at least 10 metres away from a water course etc., then you can usually 'self-certify' and won't need a permit from the Environment Agency. How you you deal with solids? Composting on your own land is a simple way of turning the solid matter into compost, which in turn, can be returned to the land. We cover several methods on our composting web page, however, most people are surprised at how little 'raw material' they actually create. Faeces accounts for only 20% by volume of your bodily output (80% being urine), and of that 80% is water. That means that as the solids compost, the volume will decrease dramatically (partly because much of the remaining moisture is released and partly through the composting process itself). The main considerations with composting is that it's done in an area where flooding is not expected. Whilst you can use the compost as a fertiliser on your own land/garden, you cannot sell food that is grown with the compost, unless further safety testing is conducted. Most people use it as a growth boosting natural mulch around trees and shrubs. For non-domestic installations (commercial sites, camp sites etc), it's important to seek

further clarification and advice from the relevant authorities. This is because the volume of 'waste' outputs is likely to be larger.

This information is provided as a guide only – it's vital to do your own thorough research and speak to the relevant authorities!

Building Regulations and compost toilets In 2010, the new part G of the Building Regulations for the UK came into force. The new regulations are part of a drive to reduce domestic water consumption by 18% and they mention compost toilets for the first time.

Part G 4.19 states (accessed and text copied as of Jan 2018)

(Environment Agency) can be tricky!

"Chemical toilets or composting toilets may be used where: a. suitable arrangements can be made for the disposal of the waste either on or off the site; and b. the waste can be removed from the premises without carrying it through any living space or food preparation areas (including a kitchen); and c. no part of the installation would be installed in any places where it might be rendered ineffective by the entry of flood water."

This means provided you have a planned route to take the waste from the toilet out of the building, without going through a living area, a Separett or an Air Head compost toilet would meet building regulations. If the building you wish to install a compost toilet is an outbuilding or garden building and is of such size that it does not require building regulations, then the installation of a compost toilet would not require you to meet the above requirements.

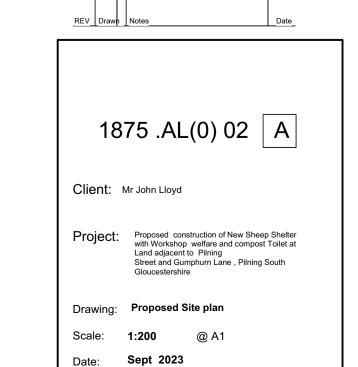
The Environment Agency and compost toilets
In England and Wales, the Environment Agency are under-resourced and are moving more towards more 'self certification', especially in low-impact systems such as compost toilets connected to individual dwellings. Unfortunately, finding the relevant information from the EA

Remember that the EA and SEPA are there to ensure that processes you engage in are safe for people to use, and don't damage or pollute the environment directly or indirectly. You might find the regulations frustrating, but they are there to ensure a safe environment for future generations!

As mentioned above, discharges to the ground of under 10 litres per day can generally be self-certified under an 'exception' clause as the discharge is considered very small. Nevertheless, you must ensure the discharge is done responsibly ie at least 10 metres away from a watercourse etc.

We suggest doing a written assessment of how you plan to deal with the outputs from your compost toilet – detail the positions of the discharge and composting points, possible contamination effects and limits etc, does the land flood, where will the compost bins be located? Have this documentation available in case officials want to ask you for more information. This will show you've been thorough and have thought through the entire

Please do check with officials in your locality – this is only a guide and has been reproduced in good faith. The summary was correct when we obtained it, but is subject to possible revisions, alterations and local interpretation which may slightly or substantially alter what is or isn't permitted.



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