

## Toilet rescue

### **What to do if you have a NatSol composting toilet (the FAC) which has not been used for some time.**

In one respect this is easier. If you are certain it hasn't been used for some time, a year or more for instance, then there should be no fresh material in the vaults. That means you can empty both of them and dispose of the compost as described in our Management Guide (MG). The best option in this respect is to carry on further composting in a dedicated bunker on site.

If the vault with the pedestal is not full and there is no sign of liquid in the vaults then it may be fine to resume use straight away but you would be wise to check the MG and go through a deep clean and general service. Get yourself the correct MG for your toilet - Mk2 or Mk3. These are available on our website at:

<https://natsol.co.uk/technical/manage-full-access/> **Note our advice on H & S.**

If you suspect problems then follow this sequence:

1. Ascertain date of last use of the toilet and any reasons why the toilet fell into disuse.
2. Remove the pedestal and prepare for a deep clean as described in the MG and Newsletter 2 - Appendix 1. If you have a Mk2 toilet with a fibreglass (GRP) pedestal check to see that the rubber bungs are still in place – see pic 1. Contact us if missing.
3. In the process of removing the pedestal you may find out whether you have a short urine plate – see pic 2. In GRP pedestals this will most likely have been held in place with a removable clip – see pic 3. These easily drop out and if not immediately apparent it may turn up in the compost. There is an alternative, permanent method of hanging the short plate inside a GRP pedestal – ask NatSol.
4. Check and clean out the Back Inlet Gully (BIG). You may have to find it first. Sometimes they end up covered in earth. See MG for cleaning instructions. The lid has three screws but it is highly likely these will have corroded if there has not been regular maintenance. Under those circumstances you will have to prise off the whole aluminium cover including the frame.
5. If more than one year ago empty both vaults as described in the guide.
6. If you find significant liquid in the bottom of the vault (or if the vault is liquid filled) then some detective work will be necessary. Try to find out if the liquid was the reason the toilet fell into disuse. The possible causes for liquid are:
  - a. Ground water backing up from the urine soakaway due to incorrect installation. If this is the cause you will need to discuss the matter with

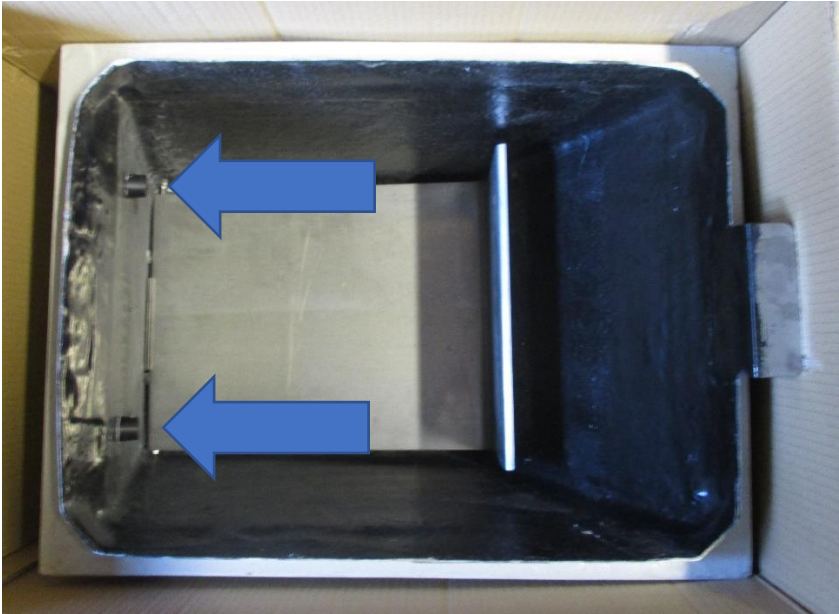
NatSol. We may have photographic evidence of the soakaway installation and of what happens to rainwater from the roof.

- b. Too much urine getting into the vault. This could be due to the lack of a short urine plate. On Mk 2 toilets the short urine plate has been supplied as a retrofit. Your toilet may never have had one and it may have functioned very well without one until use of the toilet increased. Try to find out about the history of usage.
- c. The 40mm white pipe from the urinal does not properly enter the grey urine gutter under the floor. Pour water down the urinal and look through the RH floor hatch to check.
- d. On most Mk 2 toilets there is a join where the grey urine gutter passes through the RH vault wall to the outside. This could be leaking.
- e. The grey urine gutter running across both vaults might be blocked with soak material and other solids. Remove the screwed access cap on the outside of the vaults (usually on the LHS) and shine in a torch or take a picture along the gutter. Use drain rods to clean out. Then re-clean the BIG.
- f. The urine separating plate on the pedestal has not been delivering urine into the gutter. You should be able to check its position by looking through a front floor hatch.
- g. The vault has a crack.
- h. The building has a significant roof leak. This should be evident from dampness in walls or on the floor.

**NB: From experience we can tell you that a) and b) are the commonest causes of excess liquid and that c), d) and e) are the next most common.**

- 7. If you have ascertained the most likely reason for the liquid then we suggest you give us a call and we will run through your conclusions and provide assistance whenever possible. This is free unless a site visit is required. Email us scans of any logbook records.
- 8. If just a small amount of liquid is present then add dry wood shavings and rake these in. If it is more than (say) 10cms deep and is not a mixture of solids and liquids then give us a call. If solids and liquids and not too deep then raking in more shavings should solve the problem.
- 9. Now you can run through some other checks. Access the cowl using a ladder. You must have at least two people on site for safety reasons. Check for corrosion and free rotation. Remove the upper part and grease the spindle. Make sure the retaining catch is tight and in the correct position.
- 10. Clean the urinal and check that water flows away through the pipe.
- 11. If you have a Mk2 toilet check for corrosion on the floor hatches. The frames in particular may have corroded. We can now offer stainless steel replacements and we provide guidance on fitting them.
- 12. Check over your building. If there is a gully on the rainwater downpipe make sure this is not blocked and that it has some clean water in it.
- 13. Refit the pedestal and start that vault off with a whole bale of wood-shavings.
- 14. Make sure that instructions for use are clearly displayed and that a management regime has been put in place.

**Pictures**



Pic 1.



Pic 2.



Pic 3.

**Appendix 1:**

## Newsletter 2: CLEANING A NATSOL TOILET

### Dear Owner or Manager,

This is our second newsletter. You are receiving this because you asked to be on the mailing list or have recently bought a toilet. If circumstances have changed please let us know and we will remove your details. Perhaps somebody else in your organisation has taken over management. At their request we will happily add them to the list.

The first newsletter was about urine separation; this one is about cleaning. When cleaning any toilet facility you should wear appropriate clothing.

Let's deal with the easy jobs first:-

### Urinal

To clean the bowl all you need to do is to spray the surface with a multi surface cleaning agent and then slowly tip a litre or two of water down the bowl whilst scrubbing around with a brush kept for that purpose. Wipe down the outside of the bowl and the pipes underneath with a cloth. Clean the floor below the urinal. The floor is the most likely source of odour.

The frequency of cleaning will depend on the level of use but we suggest that once a week should be a minimum for any toilet and that busy toilets be cleaned more frequently, perhaps daily.

### Pedestal

You may have a grey or white GRP (fibre glass) pedestal OR a stainless steel one with natural wood or black top. The seat will be plastic unless it has been replaced with a different type. Whichever pedestal you have the outer surfaces should be cleaned regularly with a multi surface cleaning agent and a cloth. As with any other toilet pedestal, dirt tends to accumulate around the seat hinges.

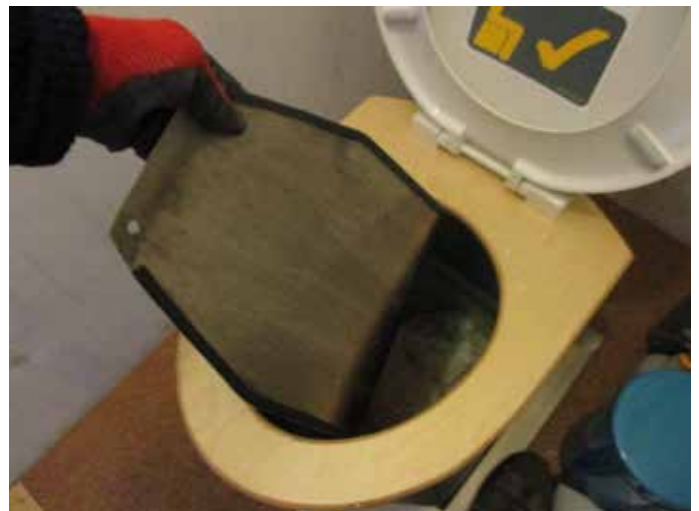
### Regular cleaning inside the pedestal:-

Regular cleaning of the inside of the pedestal is easy - if you have the right gear. We strongly suggest that you invest in a pump up sprayer of the type usually available from garden centres. Keep this topped up with water and disinfectant and a little bit of non-foaming soap. You will also need a standard toilet brush and holder.

Some of you will have a removable short urine plate inside your pedestal which can be taken out through the top – see picture A.

If you have a short plate, remove it and take it outside to spray off and scrub over. Whilst out of the pedestal, or if you don't have a short plate, spray around inside the pedestal and use the brush to clean all accessible surfaces. A little bit of water will probably go in the compost chamber but you can always add more soak. Then refit the short plate.

Depending on usage this cleaning procedure might be a once a week. It could be every day on busier sites.



A

## Deep clean

For this you will need to get well protected with appropriate clothing including: rubber gloves, wellies and goggles. Picture B.

Depending on usage your pedestal will need a deep clean once, twice, or maybe four times a year. This involves taking it outside and laying it on its side on a non-scratching surface such as a piece of builders' polythene – see picture C. You will then be able to clean the lower parts using the sprayer and brush but you will probably need to use some acid to remove calcium deposits from the bottom of the plate.

Most builders' merchant will have two grades of acid. The stronger one will be for removing mortar stains and the weaker one for patio cleaning. The patio cleaning acid is safer to use, although it will take longer to get the pedestal clean.

It will be useful to have a small brush such as an old washing up brush. Pour some of the acid into a plastic container and dipping the brush into this gently scrub clean the bottom part of the urine separating plate. Picture D.

Eventually return unused acid to the container, rinse everything down with water and refit the pedestal - and the short plate, if you have one.



B



C



D