



Valley Septics are specialists in the wastewater industry designing and installing wastewater systems for both domestic and commercial projects.

Our systems produce a high-quality effluent, with minimal maintenance when compared with other systems, treating wastewater to an advanced secondary level.

With a full range of wastewater treatment systems from a *Standard System* to the newly approved *Secondary Passive System*, Valley Septics can to provide septic solutions for any project.

ALLEY EPTICS

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Congratulations

Congratulations and thank you for choosing Valley Septics to design and install your new septic system. Our systems are cost efficient, safe, environmentally-friendly and designed to efficiently treat domestic and commercial wastewater.

Valley Septics are one of the most respected installers in Eastern Victoria and have been a leader in installing septic systems for over 30 years. Our products are designed specifically for local conditions with integrity to provide an environmentally-friendly septic solution for users.

This Owner's Manual explains the proper use, procedures and maintenance required to ensure the correct operation of your Standard Septic System to treat wastewater.

It is your responsibility to ensure the system is used:

- correctly and within its treatment capacity
- in compliance with your local Council and government regulations.

To maintain the performance of your treatment system for many years this *Owner's Manual* must be followed.

Please carefully read through this entire document and retain it for future reference.



Understanding your system

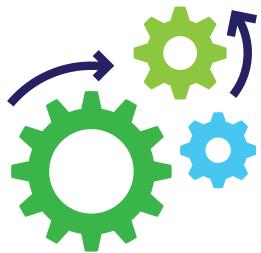
Your Standard Septic System is an easy to use and low maintenance system which utilises a natural process to treat effluent. It is one of the most cost-effective systems available which requires minimal maintenance.

It is an extremely strong and durable system, withstanding wide fluctuations in both hydraulic and organic loading and is designed to operate with zero inflows for several weeks, it will cover holiday periods and periodic use.

No power is used during the treatment process and there is low visual impact on the environment. By respecting the system and ensuring you complete the required maintenance, you should get many years of trouble free use from your *Standard Septic System*.

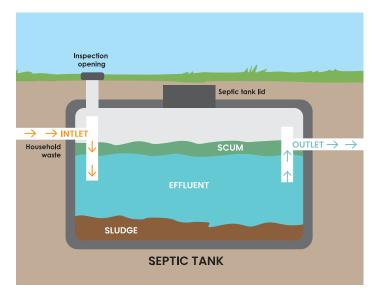


How your system works



All wastewater from your kitchens, laundries, toilets and bathrooms is directed to one sewer outlet drain which is connected to a large capacity concrete primary septic tank.

Naturally occurring bacterial microorganisms in the septic tank provide the first stage of the treatment process by decomposing settled solids through anaerobic digestion. Semi liquid solids settle at the bottom of the septic tank to form a sludge layer. Fats and other light matter float to the surface and form a scum layer. Liquid wastewater which has now had a large proportion of the suspended solids removed exits from the outlet of the septic tank into absorption trenches.



During the second stage of the treatment process, the wastewater travels to the first distribution pit (square concrete pit). From the pit, wastewater flows into the first absorption drain and soaks into the soil and disperses via absorption and evaporation. Once the trench is full of wastewater, the effluent then overflows out of the second distribution pit into the second absorption drain and so on.

The system is designed to treat wastewater to an acceptable level for it to be reintroduced into the environment. Nutrients from the treated effluent are returned to ground. The absorption drains are ideally placed in a dedicated lawn area or large open area.

Do's&don'ts

For your septic system to run efficiently, it relies on the establishment of a bacteria colony to break down the solids in your septic tank. Disposing of poisons, chemicals, and cleaners down your sinks and into your treatment system can kill the bacteria and result in poor quality wastewater being produced.

We encourage you to adopt practical measures to limit the use of disinfectants when cleaning.

Follow these tips to keep your system working to its full capacity.

In the bathroom

- Use bio-degradable detergents with low alkaline and sodium, lowphosphorus or phosphorus free products to clean
- Use bleaches, antibacterial, or antiseptic solutions in a bucket and dispose of the water in yard
- Install water-saving fixtures (shower roses, tap nozzles, etc.)
- Inspect your plumbing fixtures regularly for any leaks or damages
- Do not use harsh or abrasive chemicals, bleaches, antiseptics, disinfectants, dyes or amonia acids

In the kitchen

- Use bio-degradable detergents with low alkaline and sodium, lowphosphorus or phosphorus free products to clean
- Scrape all dishes to remove fats, grease etc. before washing
- Use a sink strainer to restrict food scraps entering the system
- Install water-saving fixtures
- Run your dishwasher only when full
- Inspect your plumbing fixtures regularly for any leaks or damages.
- Do not use harsh or abrasive chemicals, bleaches, antiseptics, disinfectants, dyes or amonia acids
- Do not dispose of vegetables, milk, yoghurt, meats, coffee beans, oils, grease or fats down the sink into the system
- Do not use a food waste disposal unit

In the laundry

- Use phosphate free and low sodium detergents, preferably in liquid form
- Spread your loads of laundry throughout the week and run your washing machine only when full
- Use a bucket and dispose of bleaches, antibacterial or antiseptic solutions in the yard
- Use washing soda as an alternative to fabric softener
- ✓ Install water-saving fixtures
- Inspect your plumbing fixtures regularly for any leaks or damages.
- Do not use harsh or abrasive chemicals, bleaches, whiteners, nappy soakers, spot removers or fabric softener

In the toilet

- Inspect your plumbing fixtures regularly for any leaks or damages.
- Use full flush and minimal toilet paper. Pay particularly attention to the amount used by children in the dwelling
- * Do not use toilet cleaners
- Do not flush sanitary napkins, disposable nappies or 'flushable' moist wipes down the toilet

Outside

- Inspect the system regulary
- De-sludge the tank at least once every three years
- Divert drainage, roof, surface and rain water away from septic system
- Wash the dog in the yard
- Clean paint brushes outside using a bucket of water and don't dispose of water down sink
- Do not concrete or pave over any system components
- Do not cover any system components with extra soil
- Do not plant trees or plants with invasive root systems near or on system
- Do not drive vehicles over any system components
- Do not discharge the water from roof gutters, drainage pipes, swimming pool, spa into your septic system
- Do not dispose of solvents, paints, antifreeze, engine oil or other chemicals in the septic system
- Do not allow humans or animals to consume the treated effluent
- Do not turn off the power to your system
- Do not allow unauthorised people to tamper with your system

Around the house

- Use hot water and natural bacterial cleaners such as vinegar, bicarbonate of soda or tea tree oil to wash your floors.
- Do not dispose of unused antibiotics into the system
- Do not alter or disconnect any components of the system without local authority approval and the use of a licensed plumber

Items strictly not to be used or placed down your drains

- Nappy San
- Milton Sterilising Solution
- Antibacterial solutions (ie Pine-O-Clean, dishwashing liquid, hand wash)
- Exit Mould or anything remotely similar
- Ajax powders or any chlorine-based product
- Toilet Blues, Toilet Ducks or similar products
- Antibiotics
- Dairy products, cooking oils, food scraps
- Bleach, disinfectants, whiteners, oven or drain cleaners
- Paints, thinners, petroleum products
- Sanitary products, wipes, condoms, plastic, cigarette butts etc.

REMEMBER

Every drain and basin in your house is connected to your septic, so any product you put in your drains will end up in your septic system.

Suggested products

Septic systems rely on bacteria to help reduce the solids within the system and treat the wastewater. Maintaining a healthy level of bacteria is vital to keep the system operating.

Disinfectants in large quantities can be harmful and have serious implications on the processes of a healthy septic system. You need to restrict the use of harsh chemicals or bleaches and avoid all caustic products, as these can kill the micro-organisms and reduce the effectiveness of the system.

The list below is a sample of products labelled as 'safe for grey water systems' on their packaging, however we have not tested or verified these products.

These products should be used in moderation, based on the dosage amount recommended by the product manufacturer. Always read the labels on household products to determine if they are safe for septic systems and monitor the level of use. When selecting cleaning products, we recommend you look for products that are phosphate free or low phosphate.

Front loader laundry powder

- Ecostore
- Aldi Laundrite
- Earth Choice

Top loader laundry powder

- Ecostore
- Aldi Laundrite
- Earth Choice

Surface/kitchen cleaners

- Jiff Cream Cleanser
- Koala Eco Natural

Front loader laundry liquid

• Earth Choice

• Aldi Laundrite

Cold Power

Cold Power

Aldi Laundrite

Aldi Trimat

- Ecostore
- Aldi Trimat
- Aldi Green Action
- Dynamo Professional

Top loader laundry liquid

- Earth Choice
- Aldi Green Action
- Ecostore
- Dymano Professional

Fabric softeners

(Use minimally, once weekly)

- Jiff Cream Cleanser
- Koala Eco Natural

Dishwashing powder

- Finish
- Earth Choice
- Woolworths Shine
- Coles Ultra

Multipurpose cleaner

- Earth Choice
- Coles Green Choice
 Bosistos

• Organic Choice

Floor cleaner

• Earth Choice

Hot water

• Bosistos

Aldi Logix

Ecostore

Koh

•

Dishwashing liquid

- Koala Eco Natural
- Coles Green Choice
- Earth Choice
- Woolworths Shine

Bathroom cleaner

- Macro Bath & Shower
- Coles Green Choice
- Bosistos
- CLR Bathroom
- OzKleen Shower Power
- Gel

Aldi Green

Action

• Aldi Tandil

Toilet cleaner

(Toilet fresheners are not recommended)

- Jiff or any cream cleanser
- Avoid any Anti-Bacterial, Bleach or Ammonia based products

Disclaimer: Please note the above list of products is not intended to promote or discredit any product or any company and is provided as a guide only. Always read product labels.

Bath salts

When using epsom salts in your bath, use:

- less than two cups of epsom salts per bath
- no more than once per week.

Toilet paper

- Check toilet paper packaging is recommended for septic tank use.
- It is very important to use minimal toilet paper to prevent blockages at the opening of the septic tank and to reduce the frequency the septic tank will need to be desludged.
- Particular attention should be paid to the amount of toilet paper placed in the system by children.

Floor cleaner

- We highly recommend that you wash your floors with hot water and a natural bacterial cleaner such as vineaar. bicarbonate of soda or tea tree oil.
- We also recommend you dispose of the water on the lawn or garden rather than flushing it down the sink.

Planting guide for septic system areas

Your septic system does not have to restrict the landscaping of your property. Plenty of plants can and will contribute to the look, feel and function of your garden without causing damage.

Grass is always the best option surrounding your septic tank, pump chamber and sand filter area. The best plants for landscaping around your septic system are those with shallow roots, non-water seeking and non-root invasive plants which are happy in dry conditions. Plants should draw water but not shade the system.

You do have to be mindful that some vegetation can cause major problems to your septic system. Trees on top of any part of the septic system must be avoided. Roots can infiltrate the system, effluent field and associated pipes, causing blockages or breakages, preventing the septic system from functioning as it should. These situations can be minimised by the careful planning and appropriate placement of plants, shrubs and trees.

Below is a list of plants that should not be planted on or within 10m of your septic system due to the risk of roots blocking the pipes.

Never plant on or within 10m of your system

- River Red Gum
- Lemon Scented Gum
- Claret Ash
- Sugar Gum
- Plane Tree
- Poplar
- Weeping Willow
- Alder

Eucalyptus camaldulensis Eucalyptus citriodora

- Fraxinus raywoodi
- Eucalyptus cladocalyx
- Platanus all species
- Populus nigra
- Salix babylonica
- Alnus all species



Below is a list of suitable plants, although extensive it is not exhaustive. For further advice about the best plants to use on your property, we recommend you contact your local nursery or ask an appropriately qualified person to help you.

Grasses, sedges, rushes and lilies

- Tussock Grass
- Tall Wheat Grass
- Lawn Turf Grass
- Weeping Grass
- Knobby Club-rush
- Tall Spike-rush
- Common Spike-rush
- Soft Bog-rush
- Tall Rush
- Sea Rush
- Slender Bog-rush
- Zig-zag Bog-rush
- Spiny-headed Mat-rush
- Common Spike-rush
- Hydrangea
- Common Rapier-sedge
- Saw-sedge
- Wire Rapier-sedge
- Common Grass-sedge
- Swamp Club-sedge
- Tall Saw-sedge
- Pale Twig-sedge
- Common Sword-sedge
- Tall sedge
- Black-anther Flax-lilly
- Tasman Flax-lily
- Pale Flax-lily
- Short Purple-flag
- Cannas

Trees and shrubs

- Swamp Paperbark
- Salt Paperbark
- Scented Paperbark
- Hop Goodenia
- Cross Honey Myrtle
- Creeping Saltbush
- Coast Saltbush
- Marsh Saltbush
- Austral Indigo
- Heath Tea-tree
- Woolly Tea-tree
- Prickly Tea-tree
- Sticky Wattle
- Crimson Bottlebrush
- Scarlet Bottlebrush
- Flowering Tamarisk

- Poa labillardierei
- Thinopyrum ponticum
- Microlaena stipoides
- Isolepis nodosa
- Eleocharis sphacelata
- Eleocharis palustris
- Schoenus tesquorum
- Juncus procerus
- Juncus kraussii
- Schoenus lepidosperma
- Schoenus brevifolius
- Lomandra longifolia
- Eleocharis acuta
- Hydrangea
- Lepidosperma filiforme
- Gahnia filum
- Lepidosperma semiteres
- Carex breviculmis
- Isolepis inundata
- Gahnia clarkei
- Baumea acuta
- Lepidosperma longitudinale
- Carex appressa Dianell revoluta
- Dianella tasmanica

Dianella longifolia

Patersonia fragilis Eleocharis acuta

Melaeleuca ericifolia Melaeleuca halmaturorum

- Melaleuca squarrosa
- Goodenia ovata
- Melaeleuca decussata
- Atriplex semibaccata
- . Atriplex cinerea
- Atriplex paludosa
- Indigofera australis
- Leptospermum myrsinoides
- Leptospermum lanigerum
- Leptospermum continentale
- Acacia howittii
- Callistemon citrinus
- Callistemon macropunctatus

Tamarix juniperina

Groundcovers

Acanthus mollis

Laurifolia x willsii

Isotoma fluviatilis

Liriope giganteum

Viola hederacea

Trifolium Fragiferum

Hibbertia scandens

Lonicera japonica

Acacia longifolia

Acacia retinoides

Callistemon viminalis

Callistemon lilacinus

Eucalyptus pressiana

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Hakea saligna

Hardenbergia violacea

Vitis coignetiae

Hederas

Trees and shrubs - over 2m way from system

Western Coastal Wattle Acacia cyclops

Geraniaceae

Trifolium repens

- Ovster Plant
- Royal Mantle
- Blue Star Creeper
- Lily Turf
- Native Violet
- Geranium
- Strawberry Clover
- White Clover
- Perennials

Climbers

Ivy

•

Snake Vine

Glory Vine

Japanese

Jasmine

Honeysuckle

Bougainvillea

Swallow Wattle

Weeping Bottlebrush

Lilac Bottlebrush

Bell-fruit Mallee

• Willow leaf Hakea

• Wirilda

Happy Wanderer

Maintenance

Your septic system works via a natural biological process and needs ongoing maintenance and care to ensure it works properly. What you put down your drains and toilets will affect how well your septic system functions.

All sewage treatment systems require regular maintenance to ensure the effluent quality consistently meets the required standard set by the regulating authority.

As the system owner, it is your responsibility and you are legally obliged to ensure your septic system is maintained. We recommend (and it is generally a requirement of the septic permit approval) that you complete a thorough routine inspection of your septic system. You can conduct an inspection yourself to ascertain if you think the system is operating correctly. If, however, you are in any doubt you should contact either the installer or a licensed plumber/drainer to carry out the appropriate inspections and if necessary, repairs as not all plumbers are knowledgeable in the use and maintenance of septic system. We offer an annual maintenance program where we will come and complete a service of the system to ensure it is working as it should be.

Your local authority may require assessments to be conducted on your septic system once it has been installed. The frequency of these tests is determined by your local authority. If you are contacted by your local authority, please contact us and we can organise an inspection and complete a septic assessment on your behalf. All records are kept, and reports are sent to you and the local authority.

It is a requirement of the septic permit approval that your septic tank be desludged (pumped out) every three years to help maintain your septic system's optimum performance.

Failure to desludge the septic tank every three years:

- could cause build-up of solids within the tank
- will void any warranties.

The entry to the septic tank is buried below ground. You will need to uncover the entry to the septic tank before your septic tank can be desludged. The measurements on your as installed plan will show where the entry to the septic tank is located.

The desludging of the septic tank should always be completed by a qualified person and a company specialised in this field. If you need, we can provide a list of deslduge contractors in your local area.

All openings of the septic system including the septic tank need to be secured in place and remain accessible at all times for us to complete inspections and maintenance.

Be aware there are pipes buried near your septic system. Please speak to us before digging or excavating near your septic system to eliminate any potential damage. You will also find an installation plan attached to this manual which shows the location of all components of your septic system.

Annual service inspection sheet

To service your system each year, complete this checklist:

Visual inspection of septic system

- Check all components of the system structurally sound, not damaged, cracked, etc.
- Check concrete lids are easily accessible
- Inspect the area near the septic tank and effluent field to ensure there are no abnormal wet spots
- Check additional soil been not been placed over the effluent area
- Check there has been no vehicular traffic driven over the system and possibly caused damage
- Inspect your plumbing fixtures regularly for any leaks or damages.
- Check no part of the system has been altered or damaged

Desluging requirements



Every three years, your septic tank must be desludged (emptied). It is recommended that sludge and scum levels are recorded at each annual service.

Use this Desludge Record to keep track of your three-yearly desludge of the septic tank and pump chambers.

Date	Desludge Agent	Receipt received

Your responsibilities

The new EPA Regulations 2021 places heavy responsibilities on the system owner to ensure their septic system is maintained to an acceptable standard. For more information on the system owners responsibilities we encourage you to visit the EPA website.

The system owner is solely responsible for the operation and maintenance of the septic system on their property. To ensure you are taking responsibility for your septic system, we encourage system owners to:

- Each week, walk around the septic system components to make sure there are no abnormal wet-spots and your septic system components are free from weeds and debris.
- If the service detects any irregularities or deficiencies with the system, we encourage you to acknowledge them and quickly authorise repairs to be completed.
- Maintain accurate and complete records of your septic system - set up a file to ensure accurate and complete records are on hand.

Troubleshooting

When you notice a problem with your system, we encourage you to review the following list to determine what might be occurring with your system.

In some instances, it is likely you may be able to fix the problem yourself, follow the instructions on what to do in these instances.

If however, after a short attempt you are able to fix the issue, please call us. We will try our best to determine the cause of the issue and advise if a visit from our service agent is required.

Wetness near septic system

Description

- Surface ponding or puddles in effluent field
- Potential cause
- Effluent drains may be blocked, crushed or broken
- A blocked or broken system can not empty as intended. You may find one area of the field is very wet and other parts are dry

Description

Wetness over all of effluent field

- Potential cause
- Excessive amount of rain
- After extensive rain the irrigation field may be saturated.

Potential cause

Damaged pipe

Action

If this has occurred, please call us to arrange a site inspection to determine the cause.

Action

- The effluent field will dry naturally with time.
- Please do not drive over the septic system.

Action

• Please call us to arrange a site inspection to determine the cause.

Abnormal odours

Description

Septic odour inside and outside house

Potential cause

Septic odour trapped within pipes.

Potential cause

Potential cause

fats inhibiting the

treatment process

Excess greases and

Breather in roof too short

Action

It is recommended you run the water in all of the bathrooms and toilets to ensure the pipes are full and create a water seal to ensure the odour no longer occurs

Action

- In some instances the breather in the roof of the dwelling is too short which produces a septic odour in close proximity to the house.
- We recommend you to call a plumber to see if the breather pipe needs to be extended

Action

- We ask that you monitor what is placed in your septic system as this could be causing the bacteria to die in the septic tank. Strictly avoid using all products harmful to the septic system identified in our Do's & Don'ts list.
- You can return the treatment system to normal operation by adding Actizyme (available from supermarkets) for 2-3 weeks and wait for the system to naturally correct itself.

Description

Description

Septic odour close

to septic system

Reduced biological activity in system

Potential cause

Inflow of acidic, caustic, disinfectant or antibacterial liquids

Action

- Try releasing fresh water into the system to dilute the chemicals. Run a tap for around 10 to 15 minutes to allow clean water into the system. After 24 hours the biological activity should recover and the odour should reduce or disappear.
- Fill tank with water during initial use and after desludging of tank to reduce odours
- Help return the treatment system to normal operation by adding Actizyme (available from supermarkets) for 2-3 weeks and wait for the system to naturally correct itself.

Potential cause

Use of antibiotics and medicines

Action

Help the septic tank become established with bacteria colony by placing a handful of lime or actizyme down the toilet every day for about a week or until the smell goes away.

Subsidence

Description

Subsidence around septic tank

Potential cause

The soil type will determine how well the backfilling process will work. Generally with heavy clay soils it is difficult to compact around the tank as it is cylindrical

Blockage

Description

Slow flushing toilets or other plumbing in the home

Potential cause

A blockage may have occurred at the entry to your septic tank which is causing the toilet to flush slowly.

Action

Usually it takes a couple of heavy rainfalls to dissolve the clay and for it to fill up any air pockets around the tank.

Once this has happened you simply need to back fill the sunken area with top soil and there should be no further subsidence. The structural integrity of the septic system is not compromised and subsidence up to 1.5 feet can occur.

Action

There is an inspection opening (I.O.) at the front of the septic tank (90mm PVC pipe with square or round concrete cover). at ground level. Over time this may have been covered with additional soil, rubble or knocked off.

Please lift cover off and place the end of a broom stick or stake down the pipe. If there was a blockage you will hear a whoosh sound and water running into the septic tank.

If this does not work, you might have a blockage in your house pipework which requires a plumber to fix.

Emergencies

If you have a concern about the operation of your septic system:

- contact us promptly, between 8:00am and 5:00pm for assistance.
 Phone: (03) 5633 2306
 Email: info@valleyseptics.com.au
- please minimise your water usage until we can attend your property. Try not to use washing machines, dishwashers or baths and limit showers to a few minutes.

When to contact a plumber

We encourage you to call a plumber if you are experiencing a toilet or other fixtures failing or slow to drain freely and you have followed the steps in the troubleshooting guide. These problems are usually due to pipe blockages between the house and the septic tank rather than a failure of your wastewater treatment system. The plumber will advise you if there is a problem with the system.



Warranty

Valley Septics and our suppliers provide the following warranty on all completed septic installations:

- 7 years on concrete components Eg: septic tank
- 6 years on workmanship

Warranty is effective from the date of installation.

This warranty does not cover:

- Systems which have not had the septic tank desludged at least once every 3 years, as per the EPA guidelines and local authority's Permit To Use.
- Proof of desludge will be required before any warranty claim can be processed.
- Any failure due to neglect, lack of regular maintenance or incorrect use of the septic system. Eg: physical damage or incorrect products used in septic system (Proof of maintenance will be required before any warranty claim can be processed.)
- Any alterations to the septic system as originally installed by Valley Septics are strictly forbidden and will result in a void of all warranties
- Any damages to the system caused by or resulting from misuse, abuse, neglect, repair, maintenance or from use other than normal and ordinary use of the system
- Damages caused by or resulting from failure to use the system in accordance with our instructions or failure to properly inspect and maintain the system
- System failure due to higher than designed wastewater loads.

Warranty claim process

Any warranty claim must be received in writing within thirty days you become aware of the issue. Valley Septics must be provided with an opportunity to inspect and rectify the system. Failure to comply with these requirements renders the warranty null and void.

Valley Septics at our discretion, shall determine whether to repair the system or provide replacement products. We are under no obligation to remove any defective products or to install any replacement products and shall not be liable or responsible for any other damages or claims arising from or relating to defective products, including but not limited to claims for general, consequential, or incidental damages, lost profits, or attorney fees.



About us

Valley Septics are specialists in the wastewater industry, designing, installing and servicing; in additional to providing reports and assessments for all types of wastewater systems.

Established in 1989, this family business has earned a high reputation with local authorities and regulators as well as builders and plumbers in and around Eastern Victoria for our knowledge and experience of domestic and commercial wastewater treatment.

We have gained Australian Standard accreditation for our VS1200 Passive Treatment System, the first and only Victorian based company to have accreditation for a passive treatment system.

With over 4,000 wastewater systems installed, we provide a full range of septic solutions for any project including a standard system to the newly approved Secondary Passive System.

We employ qualified and motivated personnel that excel in their field and are committed to providing the highest level of service, reliability and satisfaction to our customers.

If you require any further information please feel free to contact our office as we will be more than happy to help.





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