

Proper care of your on-lot septic system will:

- protect drinking water and groundwater resources from contamination
- prolong the life of your system
- reduce the incidence of malfunctions
- Prevent the extension of public sewer, which would be prohibitively expensive in rural areas



What to Know About Your On-Lot Septic System



Indications of trouble:

- *Toilet flushes sluggishly*
- *Sewer odors indoors or outdoors*
- *Sponginess around septic tank or absorption area*
- *Sewage backup into house*
- *System alarm sounds*
- *Water or sewage surfacing in yard*

Information courtesy of
Centre Region Code Agency



Dos & Don'ts of Septic Tank Care

DO conserve water to avoid overloading the system. Repair dripping faucets and leaking toilets, run washing machines and dishwashers only when full, avoid long showers, and use low-flow fixtures.

DO divert roof drains and the surface water flowing down driveways and hillsides away from the septic system.

DO learn the location of your septic tank system and absorption field and maintain access to the lid and inspection ports for service visits.

DO have your tank pumped out every three years.

DO take leftover hazardous household chemicals to your approved hazardous waste collection center for disposal. Use commercial bathroom cleaners, bleach, disinfectants, and drain and toilet bowl cleaners sparingly and in accordance with product labels.

DON'T drive or park within 10 feet of a drain field or septic tank. Do not put any structures on drainfields or the tank. The area should be left undisturbed with only mowed grass cover. Roots from nearby trees or shrubs may clog and damage your drain lines.

DON'T make repairs to your septic system without obtaining the required permit from the municipal Sewage Enforcement Officer.

DON'T use your sink or toilet as a trash can. Do not put disposable diapers, paper towels, tampons or condoms down the drain or toilet. Do not use the septic system to dispose of fats and greases or harmful chemicals.

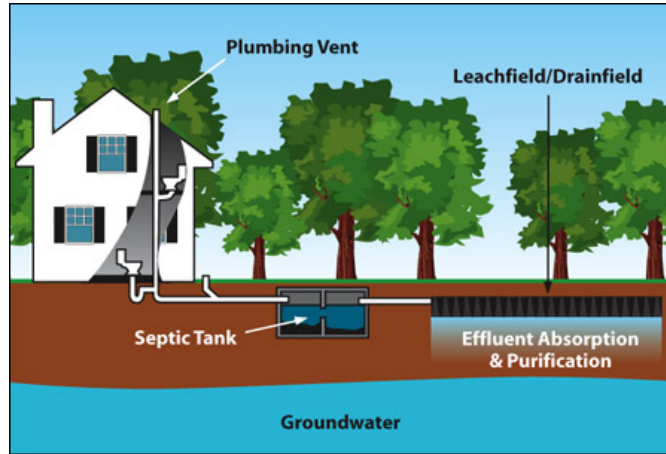
DON'T use commercial septic tank additives, cleansers yeast or sugar. These products are not necessary and some may hurt your system in the long run.

DON'T use caustic drain openers for a clogged drain. Instead, use boiling water or a drain snake to open clogs.



Care & Feeding of Your Septic Tank

Septic systems are a very simple way to treat household wastewater and are easy to operate and maintain. Although homeowners must take a more active role in maintaining septic systems, once they learn how their systems work, it is easy for them to appreciate the importance of a few sound operation and maintenance practices.



Septic systems are very much like automobiles. They need periodic inspections and regular pumping to continue working properly. They must be operated properly and cannot be overtaxed without the owner suffering consequences such as repair or replacement bills.

In areas where public sewer is not available, wastewater must be disposed of on-site. Every drop of water that goes down the drain or toilet carries with it contaminants, chemicals, and bacteria that must be removed. That is where your septic system comes into play. It is your personal wastewater treatment system.

What Is An On-Site Septic System ?

A typical septic system contains two major components: a septic tank that collects solids and the absorption field or drainfield that disposes of the liquid waste. The tank and lines are buried underground and help disperse

the wastewater we create into the soil. If designed, installed, and maintained properly, a septic system can be a cost effective, efficient way of disposing of wastewater on your property.

Septic Tank:

The septic tank is an underground watertight container built to receive sewage and retain the liquid portion before sending it to the absorption field. The tank typically is made of concrete. Baffles are placed on the inlet and outlet to insure proper flow of waste. While typically designed to hold a minimum of 1,000 gallons of sewage, the size of the tank may vary depending upon the number of bedrooms.

The primary purpose of the septic tank is to separate the solids from the liquids and to promote partial breakdown of contaminants by microorganisms naturally present in the wastewater.

Absorption Field:

The wastewater that exits the septic tank may contain many potentially disease causing microorganisms and pollutants. The absorption field is the most critical part of the septic system for reducing these contaminants and dispersing the effluent. A typical absorption field consists of trenches or bed where perforated pipe is laid over aggregate.

MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

Date	Work Completed
10/05/15	Ex. - Pump Tank

The absorption field uses nature's physical, chemical, and biological processes to clean the wastewater. The soil acts as a natural buffer to filter out many of the harmful bacteria, viruses, and excessive nutrients that are still present in the wastewater. Then, the water continues down and eventually enters the water table.

The soil can only drain or percolate a limited amount of water at a time and not all soils are suitable for septic absorption fields. Using excessive amounts of water can flood the system and cause effluent to surface on top of the ground. Excessive water use can cause system failure.