

completely abandon the old system. Make provisions to enable you to switch back to the old field. Given a few years to dry out, the old field will be partially renewed and you can begin alternating between fields. The rest periods will help keep both systems in good condition.  
 If you have a dual system — don't forget to switch fields regularly.  
 If your absorption system has inspection pipes — check them regularly.  
 Pooling of effluent in the system is an early indication of problems.

### INSPECTING YOUR TANK

If you want to save some money, you can inspect your own tank. The best practice is to check both scum and sludge levels, but the following simplified procedure works well in most cases. Once you have uncovered the manholes, inspection only takes a few minutes.

To inspect, uncover your tank and remove the manhole cover at the inlet end. If you have a redwood tank, pull up a few boards at the end. Use a shovel to push the scum mat away from the side of the tank, so you can estimate its thickness. If the mat is a foot or more thick — have your tank pumped now.

Replace the manhole cover and wash off the shovel and your hands as a sanitary precaution.

MAINTENANCE RECORD			
DATE	WORK DONE	CONTRACTOR	COST

Remember, in many cases, a permit is required from the local health department before alterations or repairs on a septic system are made. For further information, contact the Health Office in your area:

#### SACRAMENTO COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

8475 Jackson Road, Room 240  
 Sacramento, Ca. 95826  
 (916) 386-6108

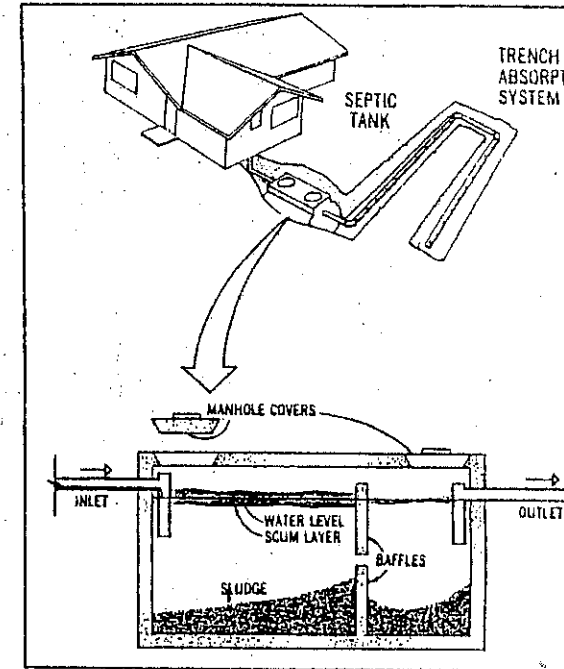
YOLCO COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
 10 Cottonwood Street  
 Woodland, CA 95695  
 (916) 666-8501

SUTTER-YUBA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
 370 Del Norte Avenue  
 Yuba City, CA 95991  
 (916) 671-1120

This guide is based on a manual prepared by the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments, in conjunction with the Environmental Health agencies of Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties, as part of a Water Quality Study supported by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

SACRAMENTO REGIONAL AREA PLANNING COMMISSION  
 800 H Street, Suite 300, Sacramento, CA 95814  
 (916) 441-5830

# Homeowners SEPTIC TANK GUIDE



What you've always wanted to forget about your septic system  
 (but can't afford to)

Well designed and well built septic systems, in suitable locations can provide effective, low-cost treatment for wastewater but, like any other device, they must be properly maintained. When homeowners don't know how to care for their systems, expensive failures can result. When a septic system fails, plumbing backs up, sewage is forced up to the ground surface and causes health hazards, and natural water bodies may become polluted. The homeowner may have to install a new leach field and if many systems fail a community may have to construct a sewer system. It makes good economic and environmental sense to take care of your septic system. This manual tells how.

## HOW A SEPTIC SYSTEM WORKS

Septic systems are buried in the ground near the home they serve. They have two main parts: the septic tank and a soil absorption system ("leach field"). The tank receives the wastewater from the home and removes most of the solids so that the liquid can easily soak into the ground without clogging the soil pores.

### The Septic Tank

The tank holds 1000-1500 gallons and is usually made of concrete or fiberglass. A typical tank is about eight feet long and five feet deep and wide. It has interior baffles to help it retain solids and manholes on the top to permit inspection and cleaning. Heavy solids form a sludge at the bottom of the tank and grease and light material form a scum near the top. Bacteria in the tank can break down some of these solids. Wastewater overflows from the clear space between the scum and sludge layers to the soil absorption system.

### The Soil Absorption System

The most common absorption system design is a leaching pit around three feet in diameter and three feet deep. Wastewater is distributed throughout the absorption system by perforated pipe, then flows through the gravel placed in the trench or pit and soaks down into the ground. The soil both treats and disposes of the wastewater. Most soils do a good job, but very coarse soil (sand or decomposing rock) may not provide much treatment, and very fine soil may be too tight to allow much wastewater to pass through.

There is little that can go wrong with the septic tank itself. Redwood or fiberglass tanks sometimes suffer structural damage, but problems much more often occur in the plumbing or in the absorption field. Blockages in the pipe between the home and the tank can usually be cleared with plumbers' tools. If your plumbing backs up suddenly under normal use in dry weather, this is probably the problem. However some pipe blockages, caused by tree roots entering the pipe or detergent buildup, can develop over a period of time.

More serious difficulties occur when the absorption system becomes clogged. The most common cause of absorption system clogging is carryover of solids from the septic tank. When sludge and scum are not periodically removed from the tank, they accumulate until they are washed out into the absorption field. Eventually either the perforated distribution pipe or the

field which is only partially clogged may work well during dry weather, but when winter rains soak the ground, or when household use is high, the system becomes overloaded and a failure becomes apparent. You may be able to clear blockages in the distribution pipe, but once the soil becomes clogged it will no longer accept the wastewater and you will need a new absorption system. It's a lot cheaper to keep your system working well through proper maintenance.

You can suspect a malfunctioning absorption field if

- there are odors, persistent wet spots or lush vegetation in the area of your system
- your plumbing becomes sluggish over a period of time
- your plumbing becomes sluggish when it is being heavily used or during wet weather
- problems persist even though your tank has been cleaned recently

## CLEANING YOUR SEPTIC TANK

The most important step to achieving trouble-free septic system operation is to remove the solids from the tank before they start to wash out into the absorption field and before the system starts showing signs of failure. Remember, once the soil absorption system is clogged, cleaning the tank will do little good — you will need a new leach field.

The easiest way to care for your system is to consult a professional. Septic tank servicemen are listed under "Septic Tanks" in the yellow pages of the phone book. They are experienced in locating, uncovering, and maintaining septic systems. If the location of your septic tank is unknown, the serviceman will find it by probing with a metal rod, following the pipe line from the house, or listening for the noise a plumber's snake makes when it hits the tank inlet. He will dig a hole to uncover the manholes in the top of the tank and then inspect the sludge and scum levels. If necessary, the serviceman will pump the contents of the tank into a tank truck for disposal at an approved site. Be sure that both compartments of the tank are emptied, and that all the solids — not just the liquid — are removed. As with any service, it often pays to get several estimates.

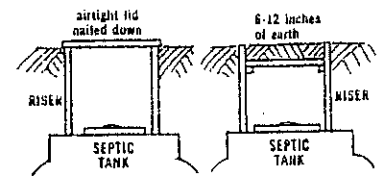
### Frequency of Cleaning

How often your tank will need pumping depends largely on the size of the tank, the number of people in the household, and the kinds of appliances you use. As a general rule, tanks should be cleaned every three years, but the period can vary considerably. The best procedure is to inspect your tank every year and have it pumped as necessary. If your system hasn't been checked in two years or more, have it inspected now. You have a considerable investment in your septic system — don't take a chance on needing an expensive leach field replacement. Some servicemen have maintenance programs under which they will regularly check your tank and recommend needed maintenance. If you want to inspect your tank yourself, see the directions at the end of this manual.

## OTHER MAINTENANCE TIPS

Record the location of your septic tank. Once you have found your tank,

and another where it will be handy. Install Risers. Another way to save future searching and digging is to install risers from the septic tank with access lids at or near ground level. Risers can be constructed out of redwood or can be made from a section of large pipe. To prevent odor problems, seal the lids airtight with a non-hardening caulking compound, or recess them under 6 to 12 inches of earth. Secure the lids so they won't be a hazard for curious children.



Minimize the liquid load. The less wastewater you produce, the less the soil will have to absorb. Water conservation is the cheapest and easiest way to protect your septic system.

- Repair leaky fixtures. Check your toilet by dropping food dye in the tank and seeing if it shows up in the bowl without flushing.
- Wash clothes only when you have a full load. Avoid doing several loads in one day.
- Take short showers instead of baths. Don't turn the shower on all the way, and turn off the water while lathering.
- Use a water saving device in your toilet tank and don't flush unnecessarily.
- Don't let water run while washing teeth, hands, vegetables, dishes, etc. Use a stoppered basin.
- Don't let rain water drain onto the leach field area from higher ground.
- There are too many other ways of conserving water to list here. Be alert for other sources of water saving ideas.

Minimize the solids load. A good rule is: don't use your septic system for anything that can be disposed of some other way. The less you put into your tank, the less often it will need pumping.

- Avoid using your garbage disposal. Compost scraps or throw them out with the trash.
- Collect grease in a container near the sink rather than pouring it down the drain.
- Non-degradable items, such as disposable diapers and sanitary napkins are especially harmful. Minimize the paper products you flush and use good quality toilet tissue that breaks up easily when wet.

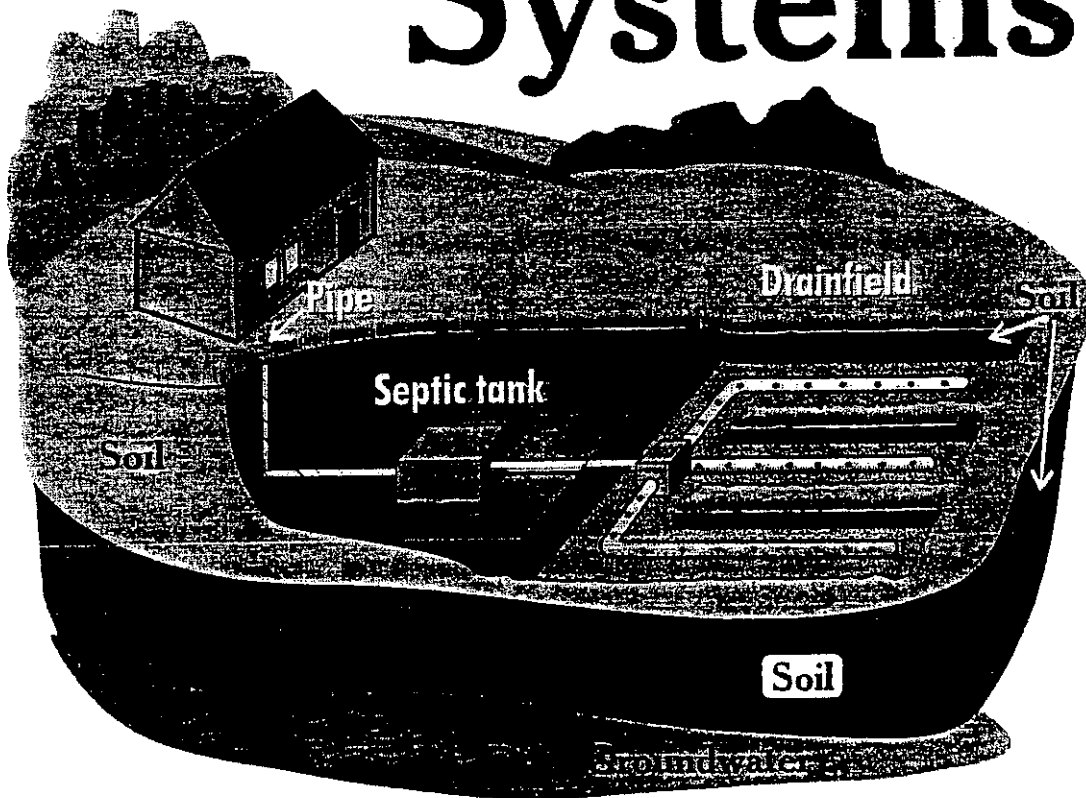
Ordinary use of household chemicals won't hurt the bacteria in your system but don't use excessive amounts and don't use your tank to get rid of oil paint thinner or other poisonous liquids.

Septic tank additives — chemicals, bacteria, enzymes, etc., do not help solids break down in the tank and will not reduce the need for pumping. (Experiments with chemicals to unclog absorption fields are encouraging, but no proven products have reached the market.)

Keep heavy vehicles off your system — underground pipes and soil pores can be damaged.



# A Homeowner's Guide to Septic Systems



## **What's Inside**

<b>Your septic system is your responsibility . . . . .</b>	<b>1</b>
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# Your Septic System is your responsibility!

Did you know that as a homeowner you're responsible for maintaining your septic system? Did you know that maintaining your septic system protects your investment in your home? Did you know that you should periodically inspect your system and pump out your septic tank?

If properly designed, constructed and maintained, your septic system can provide long-term, effective treatment of household wastewater. If your septic system isn't maintained, you might need to replace it, costing you thousands of dollars. A malfunctioning system can contaminate groundwater that might be a source of drinking water. And if you sell your home, your septic system must be in good working order.

This guide will help you care for your septic system. It will help you understand how your system works and what steps you can take as a homeowner to ensure your system will work properly. To help you learn more, consult the resources listed at the back of this booklet. A helpful checklist is also included at the end of the booklet to help you keep track of your septic system maintenance.

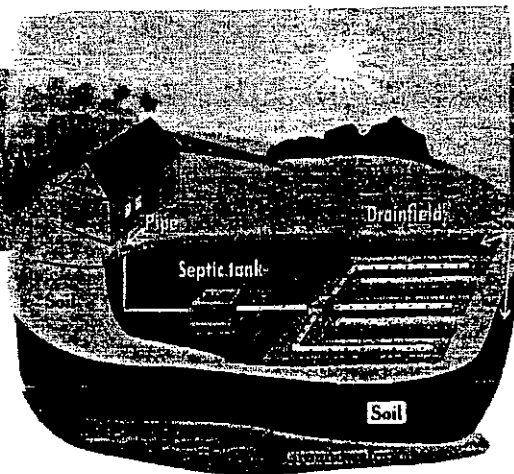
## Top Four Things You Can Do to Protect Your Septic System

1. Inspect your system (every 3 years) and pump your tank as necessary (generally every 3 to 5 years).
2. Use water efficiently.
3. Don't dispose of household hazardous wastes in sinks or toilets.
4. Care for your drainfield.

## How does it work?

### Components

A typical septic system has four main components: a pipe from the home, a septic tank, a drainfield, and the soil. Microbes in the soil digest or remove most contaminants from wastewater before it eventually reaches groundwater.



Typical onsite wastewater treatment system

## **S**eptic system aliases:

- On-lot system
- Onsite system
- Individual sewage disposal system
- Onsite sewage disposal system
- Onsite wastewater treatment system

### *Pipe from the home*

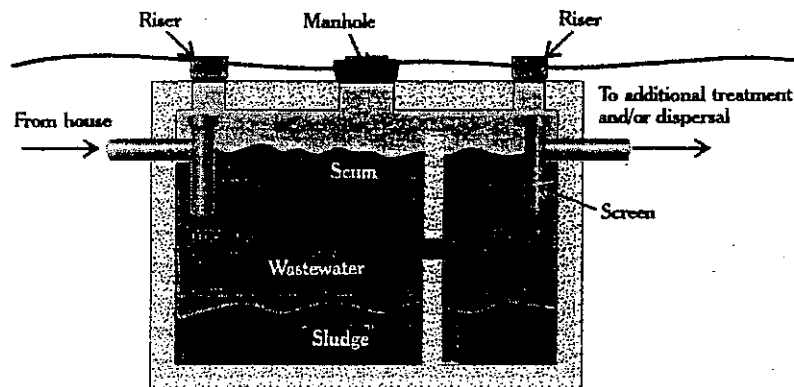
All of your household wastewater exits your home through a pipe to the septic tank.

### *Septic tank*

The septic tank is a buried, watertight container typically made of concrete, fiberglass, or polyethylene. It holds the wastewater long enough to allow solids to settle out (forming sludge) and oil and grease to float to the surface (as scum). It also allows partial decomposition of the solid materials. Compartments and a T-shaped outlet in the septic tank prevent the sludge and scum from leaving the tank and traveling into the drainfield area. Screens are also recommended to keep solids from entering the drainfield.

Newer tanks generally have risers with lids at the ground surface to allow easy location, inspection, and pumping of the tank.

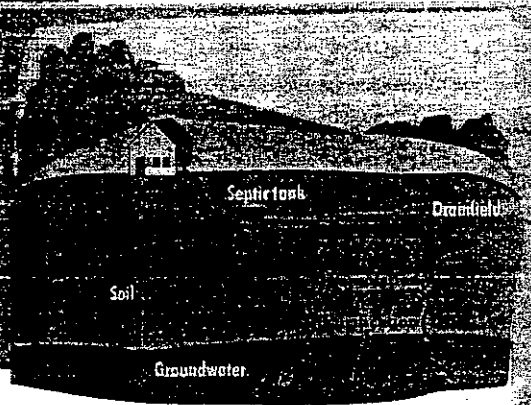
Typical double-compartment septic tank with ground-level inspection risers and screen



**T**  
**ip**

To prevent buildup, sludge and floating scum need to be removed through periodic pumping of the septic tank. Regular inspections and pumping as necessary (generally every 3 to 5 years) are the best and cheapest way to keep your septic system in good working order.

**Finding Your System**  
Your septic tank, drainfield, and reserve drainfield should be clearly designated on the site plan drawing for your home. An architectural drawing is a line drawing that is a two-dimensional representation of the buildings on your property and is usually filed in your local land records. You might also see lids or manhole covers for your septic tank. Older tanks are often hard to find because they are not visible on the surface. An inspection report can help you locate your septic system if your septic tank has no users.



### **Drainfield**

The wastewater exits the septic tank and is discharged into the drainfield for further treatment by the soil. The partially treated wastewater is pushed along into the drainfield for further treatment every time new wastewater enters the tank.

If the drainfield is overloaded with too much liquid, it will flood, causing sewage to flow to the ground surface or create backups in plumbing fixtures and prevent treatment of all wastewater.

A reserve drainfield, required by many states, is an area on your property suitable for a new drainfield system if your current drainfield fails. Treat this area with the same care as your septic system.

### **Soil**

Septic tank wastewater flows to the drainfield, where it percolates into the soil, which provides final treatment by removing harmful bacteria, viruses, and nutrients. Suitable soil is necessary for successful wastewater treatment.

### **Alternative systems**

Because many areas don't have soils suitable for typical septic systems, you might have or need an alternative system. You might also have or need an alternative system if there are too many typical septic systems in one area or the systems are too close to groundwater or surface waters. Alternative septic

systems use new technology to improve treatment processes and might need special care and maintenance. Some alternative systems use sand, peat, or plastic media instead of soil to promote wastewater treatment. Other systems might use wetlands, lagoons, aerators, or disinfection devices. Float switches, pumps, and other electrical or mechanical components are often used in alternative systems. Alternative systems should be inspected annually. Check with your local health department or installer for more information on operation and maintenance needs if you have or need an alternative system.

## *Why* should I maintain my septic system?

When septic systems are properly designed, constructed, and maintained, they effectively reduce or eliminate most human health or environmental threats posed by pollutants in household wastewater. However, they require regular maintenance or they can fail. Septic systems need to be monitored to ensure that they work properly throughout their service lives.

### **Saving money**

A key reason to maintain your septic system is to save money! Failing septic systems are expensive to repair or replace, and poor maintenance is often the culprit. Having your septic system inspected regularly (at least every 3 years) is a bargain when you consider the cost of replacing the entire system. Your system will need pumping (generally every 3 to 5 years), depending on how many people live in the house and the size of the system. An unusable septic system or one in disrepair will lower your property value and could pose a legal liability.

### **Protecting health and the environment**

Other good reasons for safe treatment of sewage include preventing the spread of infection and disease and protecting water resources. Typical pollutants in household wastewater are nitrogen, phosphorus, and disease-

causing bacteria and viruses. If a septic system is working properly, it will effectively remove most of these pollutants.

With one-fourth of U.S. homes using septic systems, more than 4 billion gallons of wastewater per day is dispersed below the ground's surface. Inadequately treated sewage from septic systems can be a cause of ground-water contamination. It poses a significant threat to drinking water and human health because it can contaminate drinking water wells and cause diseases and infections in people and animals. Improperly treated sewage that contaminates nearby surface waters also increases the chance of swimmers contracting a variety of infectious diseases. These range from eye and ear infections to acute gastrointestinal illness and diseases like hepatitis.

## How do I maintain my septic system?

### Inspect and pump frequently

You should have your septic system inspected at least every 3 years by a professional and your tank pumped as recommended by the inspector (generally every 3 to 5 years). Systems with electrical float switches, pumps, or mechanical components need to be inspected more often. Your service provider should inspect for leaks and look at the scum and sludge layers in your septic tank. If the bottom of the scum layer is within 6 inches of the bottom of the outlet tee or the top of the sludge layer is within 12 inches of the outlet tee, your tank needs to be pumped. Remember to note the sludge and scum levels determined by your service provider in your operation and maintenance records. This information will help you decide how often pumping is necessary. (See the checklist included at the end of the booklet.)

### What Does an Inspection Include?

- Locating the system
- Uncovering access holes
- Flushing the toilets
- Checking for signs of backup
- Measuring scum and sludge layers
- Identifying any leaks
- Inspecting mechanical components
- Pumping the tank if necessary

Four major factors influence the frequency of pumping: the number of people in your household, the amount of wastewater generated (based on the number of people in the household and the amount of water used), the volume of solids in the wastewater (for example, using a garbage disposal increases the amount of solids), and septic tank size.

Some makers of septic tank additives claim that their products break down the sludge in septic tanks so the tanks never need to be pumped. Not everyone agrees on the effectiveness of additives. In fact, septic tanks already contain the microbes they need for effective treatment. Periodic pumping is a much better way to ensure that septic systems work properly and provide many years of service. Regardless, every septic tank requires periodic pumping.

In the service report, the pumper should note any repairs completed and whether the tank is in good condition. If the pumper recommends additional repairs he or she can't perform, hire someone to make the repairs as soon as possible.

## **Use water efficiently**

Average indoor water use in the typical single-family home is almost 70 gallons per person per day. Leaky toilets can waste as much as 200 gallons each day. The more water a household conserves, the less water enters the septic system. Efficient water use can improve the operation of the septic system and reduce the risk of failure.

### ***High-efficiency toilets***

Toilet use accounts for 25 to 30 percent of household water use. Do you know how many gallons of water your toilet uses to empty the bowl? Most older homes have toilets with 3.5- to 5-gallon reservoirs, while newer high-efficiency toilets use 1.6 gallons of water or less per flush. If you have problems with your septic system being flooded with household water, consider reducing the volume of water in the toilet tank if you don't have a high-efficiency model. Plastic containers (such as 1/2-gallon plastic milk jugs) can be filled with small rocks and placed in a toilet tank to reduce the



amount of water used per flush. (Be sure that the plastic containers do not interfere with the flushing mechanisms or the flow of water.) You'll save about ½ gallon of water per flush! You might also consider replacing your existing toilet with a high-efficiency model to achieve even more water savings.

### ***Faucet aerators and high-efficiency showerheads***

Faucet aerators help reduce water use and the volume of water entering your septic system. High-efficiency showerheads or shower flow restrictors also reduce water use.

### ***Water fixtures***

Check to make sure your toilet's reservoir isn't leaking into the bowl. Add five drops of liquid food coloring to the reservoir before bed. If the dye is in the bowl the next morning, the reservoir is leaking and repairs are needed.

A small drip from a faucet adds many gallons of unnecessary water to your system every day. To see how much a leak adds to your water usage, place a cup under the drip for 10 minutes. Multiply the amount of water in the cup by 144 (the number of minutes in 24 hours, divided by 10). This is the total amount of clean water traveling to your septic system each day from that little leak.

## **U**se Water Efficiently!

- **Install high-efficiency showerheads**
- **Fill the bathtub with only as much water as you need.**
- **Turn off faucets while shaving or brushing your teeth**
- **Run the dishwasher and clothes washer only when they're full**
- **Use toilets to flush sanitary waste only (not kitty litter, diapers, or other trash)**
- **Make sure all faucets are completely turned off when not in use.**
- **Maintain your plumbing to eliminate leaks**
- **Install aerators in the faucets in your kitchen and bathroom**
- **Replace old dishwashers, toilets, and clothes washers with new, high-efficiency models.**

For more information on water conservation, please visit [www.epa.gov/owm/water-efficiency/index.htm](http://www.epa.gov/owm/water-efficiency/index.htm)



## **Watch your drains**

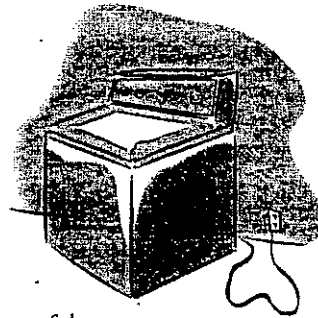
What goes down the drain can have a major impact on how well your septic system works.

### ***Waste disposal***

What shouldn't you flush down your toilet? Dental floss, feminine hygiene products, condoms, diapers, cotton swabs, cigarette butts, coffee grounds, cat litter, paper towels, and other kitchen and bathroom items that can clog and potentially damage septic system components if they become trapped. Flushing household chemicals, gasoline, oil, pesticides, antifreeze, and paint can stress or destroy the biological treatment taking place in the system or might contaminate surface waters and groundwater. If your septic tank pumper is concerned about quickly accumulating scum layers, reduce the flow of floatable materials like fats, oils, and grease into your tank or be prepared to pay for more frequent inspections and pumping.

### ***Washing machines***

By selecting the proper load size, you'll reduce water waste. Washing small loads of laundry on the large-load cycle wastes precious water and energy. If you can't select load size, run only full loads of laundry.



Doing all the household laundry in one day might seem like a time-saver, but it could be harmful to your septic system. Doing load after load does not allow your septic tank time to adequately treat wastes. You could be flooding your drainfield without allowing sufficient recovery time. Try to spread water usage throughout the week. A new Energy Star clothes washer uses 35 percent less energy and 50 percent less water than a standard model.

## Care for your drainfield

Your drainfield is an important part of your septic system. Here are a few things you should do to maintain it:

- Plant only grass over and near your septic system. Roots from nearby trees or shrubs might clog and damage the drainfield.
- Don't drive or park vehicles on any part of your septic system. Doing so can compact the soil in your drainfield or damage the pipes, tank, or other septic system components.
- Keep roof drains, basement sump pump drains, and other rainwater or surface water drainage systems away from the drainfield. Flooding the drainfield with excessive water slows down or stops treatment processes and can cause plumbing fixtures to back up.

## What can make my system fail?

If the amount of wastewater entering the system is more than the system can handle, the wastewater backs up into the house or yard and creates a health hazard.

You can suspect a system failure not only when a foul odor is emitted but also when partially treated wastewater flows up to the ground surface. By the time you can smell or see a problem, however, the damage might already be done.

By limiting your water use, you can reduce the amount of wastewater your system must treat. When you have your system inspected and pumped as needed, you reduce the chance of system failure.

A system installed in unsuitable soils can also fail. Other failure risks include tanks that are inaccessible for maintenance, drainfields that are paved or parked on, and tree roots or defective components that interfere with the treatment process.

## Failure symptoms

The most obvious septic system failures are easy to spot. Check for pooling water or muddy soil around your septic system or in your basement. Notice whether your toilet or sink backs up when you flush or do laundry. You might also notice strips of bright green grass over the drainfield. Septic systems also fail when partially treated wastewater comes into contact with groundwater. This type of failure is not easy to detect, but it can result in the pollution of wells, nearby streams, or other bodies of water. Check with a

septic system professional and the local health department if you suspect such a failure, and remember to have your septic system inspected by a professional at least every 3 years.

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*Stop, look, and smell!*

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## Failure causes

### *Household toxics*

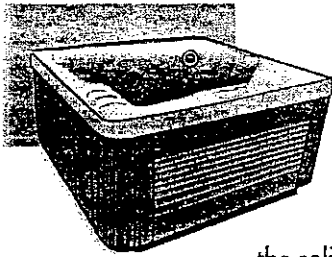
Does someone in your house use the utility sink to clean out paint rollers or flush toxic cleaners? Oil-based paints, solvents, and large volumes of toxic cleaners should not enter your septic system. Even latex paint cleanup waste should be minimized. Squeeze all excess paint and stain from brushes and rollers on several layers of newspaper before rinsing. Leftover paints and wood stains should be taken to your local household hazardous waste collection center. Remember that your septic system contains a living collection of organisms that digest and treat waste.

### *Household cleaners*

For the most part, your septic system's bacteria should recover quickly after small amounts of household cleaning products have entered the system. Of course, some cleaning products are less toxic to your system than others. Labels can help key you into the potential toxicity of various products. The word "Danger" or "Poison" on a label indicates that the product is highly hazardous. "Warning" tells you the product is moderately hazardous. "Caution" means the product is slightly hazardous. ("Nontoxic" and "Septic Safe"



are terms created by advertisers to sell products.) Regardless of the type of product, use it only in the amounts shown on the label instructions and minimize the amount discharged into your septic system.



### ***Hot tubs***

Hot tubs are a great way to relax.

Unfortunately, your septic system was not designed to handle large quantities of water from your hot tub. Emptying

hot tub water into your septic system stirs

the solids in the tank and pushes them out into the

drainfield, causing it to clog and fail. Draining your hot tub

into a septic system or over the drainfield can overload the system. Instead,

drain cooled hot tub water onto turf or landscaped areas well away from

the septic tank and drainfield, and in accordance with local regulations.

Use the same caution when draining your swimming pool.

### ***Water Purification Systems***

Some freshwater purification systems, including water softeners, unnecessarily pump water into the septic system. This can contribute hundreds of gallons of water to the septic tank, causing agitation of solids and excess flow to the drainfield. Check with your licensed plumbing professional about alternative routing for such freshwater treatment systems.

### ***Garbage disposals***

Eliminating the use of a garbage disposal can reduce the amount of grease and solids entering the septic tank and possibly clogging the drainfield. A garbage disposal grinds up kitchen scraps, suspends them in water, and sends the mixture to the septic tank. Once in the septic tank, some of the materials are broken down by bacterial action, but most of the grindings have to be pumped out of the tank. Using a garbage disposal frequently can significantly increase the accumulation of sludge and scum in your septic tank, resulting in the need for more frequent pumping.



### *Improper design or installation*

Some soils provide excellent wastewater treatment; others don't. For this reason, the design of the drainfield of a septic system is based on the results of soil analysis. Homeowners and system designers sometimes underestimate the significance of good soils or believe soils can handle any volume of wastewater applied to them. Many failures can be attributed to having an undersized drainfield or high seasonal groundwater table. Undersized septic tanks—another design failure—allow solids to clog the drainfield and result in system failure.

If a septic tank isn't watertight, water can leak into and out of the system. Usually, water from the environment leaking into the system causes hydraulic overloading, taxing the system beyond its capabilities and causing inadequate treatment and sometimes sewage to flow up to the ground surface. Water leaking out of the septic tank is a significant health hazard because the leaking wastewater has not yet been treated.

Even when systems are properly designed, failures due to poor installation practices can occur. If the drainfield is not properly leveled, wastewater can overload the system. Heavy equipment can damage the drainfield during installation which can lead to soil compaction and reduce the wastewater infiltration rate. And if surface drainage isn't diverted away from the field, it can flow into and saturate the drainfield.

*For* more information

## **Local Health Department**

### **EPA Onsite/Decentralized Management Homepage**

[www.epa.gov/owm/onsite](http://www.epa.gov/owm/onsite)

EPA developed this Web site to provide tools for communities investigating and implementing onsite/decentralized management programs. The Web site contains fact sheets, program summaries, case studies, links to design and other manuals, and a list of state health department contacts that can put you in touch with your local health department.

### **National Small Flows Clearinghouse**

[www.nesc.wvu.edu](http://www.nesc.wvu.edu)

Funded by grants from EPA, the NSFC helps America's small communities and individuals solve their wastewater problems. Its activities include a Web site, online discussion groups, a toll-free assistance line (800-624-8301), informative publications, and a free quarterly newsletter and magazine.

### **Rural Community Assistance Program**

[www.rcap.org](http://www.rcap.org)

RCAP is a resource for community leaders and others looking for technical assistance services and training related to rural drinking water supply and wastewater treatment needs, rural solid waste programs, housing, economic development, comprehensive community assessment and planning, and environmental regulations.

**National Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association, inc.**

[www.nowra.org](http://www.nowra.org)

NOWRA is a national professional organization to advance and promote the onsite wastewater industry. The association promotes the need for regular service and educates the public on the need for properly designed and maintained septic systems.

**Septic Yellow Pages**

[www.septicyellowpages.com](http://www.septicyellowpages.com)

The Septic Yellow Pages provides listings by state for professional septic pumpers, installers, inspectors, and tank manufacturers throughout the United States. This Web site is designed to answer simple septic system questions and put homeowners in contact with local septic system professionals.

**National Association of Wastewater Transporters**

[www.nawt.org](http://www.nawt.org)

NAWT offers a forum for the wastewater industry to exchange ideas and concerns. The NAWT Web site lists state associations and local inspectors and pumpers.



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