

Proper Maintenance of your Septic System

Some do's and don'ts for care of your septic system are provided below. If you keep these in mind, your on-site system should provide good service for a long time.

A well-maintained septic system can run for decades. An abused or neglected one can fail tomorrow!

Do's

Do have your septic tank pumped out regularly.

Pumping intervals

	Yearly pumping intervals for 1000 gallon tank:				
No. of People	2	3	4	5	6
Years	5.9	3.7	2.6	2.0	1.5

Do spread automatic washer use over the week rather than many loads on one day.

Do keep records of pump outs and maintenance.

Do use water conserving devices where possible. Low flush toilets and shower heads are commonly available.

Do have manually cleaned lint traps on your automatic washer.

Do check any pumps, siphons, or other moving parts of your system regularly.

Do remove or prevent trees with large root systems growing near the disposal field.

Do maintain a healthy grass cover over the disposal field to use some of the water and to prevent erosion.

Do keep surface water from upslope or from roof drains away from the disposal field.

Do check your interceptor drain regularly to ensure that it is free-flowing.

Do compost your kitchen waste. A garbage grinder should be installed only when the septic tank is oversized, and the tank will need to be pumped more often.

Do increase your septic pumping frequency by one person when a garbage grinder is used.

Don'ts

Don't overload the system with high volumes of water.

Don't connect basement sump pumps to the on-site system.

Don't allow large amounts of fats, chemicals, or solvents to enter the system; don't allow any plastics to enter.

Don't rely on septic tank additives. Although beneficial for bacterial growth, it will not eliminate the need for regular septic tank pumping.

Don't enter a septic tank without proper ventilation, a second person (adult) above ground and other requirements of the Department of Labour for confined spaces. Sewer gases can be fatal.

Don't allow vehicles or heavy equipment to drive over or park on the disposal field. This may compact the soil and crush the piping.

Don't plant anything over the disposal field except grass; especially, don't cover the tank or field with asphalt or concrete or other impermeable material.

Don't put in a separate pipe to carry wash waters to a side ditch or woods. These 'greywaters' also contain disease carrying organisms.

Don't wait for signs of failure. Check the system regularly.

Don't flush:

- coffee grounds - dental floss - paints
- disposable diapers - kitty litter - varnishes
- sanitary napkins - tampons - waste oils
- cigarette butts - condoms - poisons
- fats, grease and oils - paper towels - thinners
- disinfectants - pesticides
- photographic chemicals - other chemical wastes.