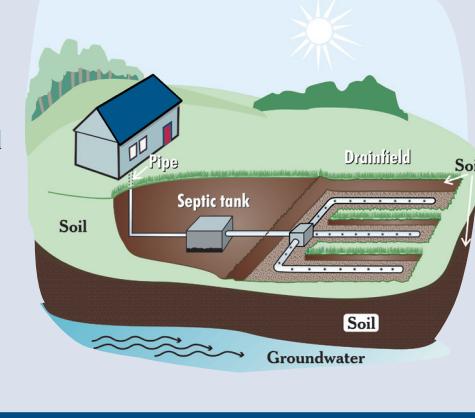


Your septic system is your responsibility!

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.



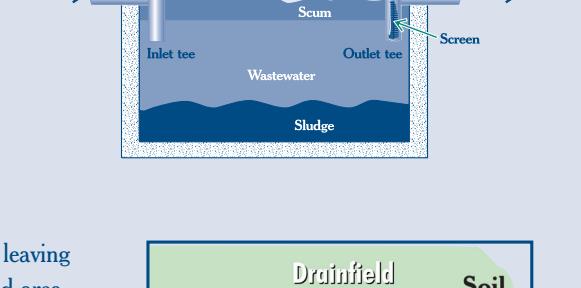
Protect Your Septic System

- 1 Regularly inspect your system and pump as necessary.
- 2 Use water efficiently.
- 3 Don't dispose of household hazardous wastes in sinks or toilets.
- 4 Care for your drainfield. Avoid driving or parking vehicles on your drainfield. Plant only grass over and near your drainfield to avoid damage from roots.

How does it work?

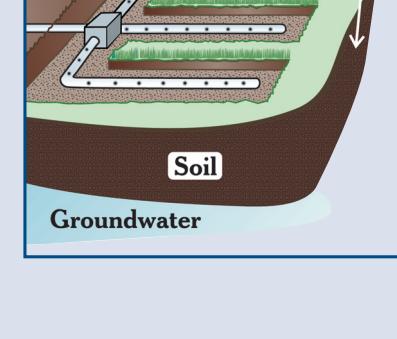
A typical septic system has four main components: a pipe from the home, a septic tank, a drainfield, and the soil. Microbes in the soil digest or remove most contaminants from wastewater before it eventually reaches groundwater.

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.



The wastewater exits the septic tank and is discharged into the drainfield for further treatment by the soil.

Microorganisms in the soil provide final treatment by removing harmful bacteria, viruses, and nutrients.



How do I maintain my septic system?

Pump frequently

You should have a typical 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). Alternative systems with electrical float switches, pumps, or mechanical components need to be inspected more often.

Use Water Efficiently!

Use Water Efficiently!

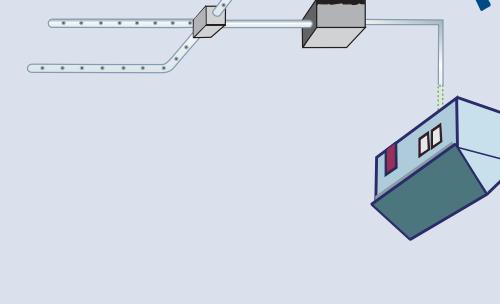
- Fill the bathtub with only as much water as you need
- Turn off faucets while shaving or brushing your teeth
- Run the dishwasher and clothes washer only when they're full
- Use toilets to flush sanitary waste only (not kitty litter, diapers, or other trash)
- Make sure all faucets are completely turned 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



coffee grounds, cat litter, paper towels, and other kitchen and bathroom items can clog and potentially damage septic system components. 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.

For more information on water conservation, please visit www.epa.gov/owm/water-efficiency

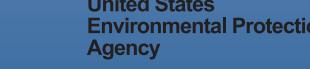
Septic Systems to Guide Homeowner's



Not in My
Septic System!



For more information, contact your local health department or visit www.epa.gov/owm/septic



United States
Environmental Protection Agency

832-B-02-006
December 2002
Revised March 2005

- 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. Roots from nearby trees or shrubs 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 roof water drainage systems away from the drainfield. Flooding the drainfield or flooding processes and can cause plumbing fixtures to back up.

How to treat your drainfield

will effectively remove most of these pollutants. Plant nutrients that can cause unusually large blooms. Excessive nitrate-nitrogen in drinking water can cause pregnancy complications, as well as methemoglobinemia (also known as blue baby syndrome) in infancy. Pathogens can cause community disease through direct or indirect body contact or ingestion of contaminated water or shellfish. If a septic system is working properly, it can cause disease-causing bacteria and viruses. Nitrogen and phosphorus are aquatic diseases and protecting water resources. Typical pollutants in household wastewater are nitrogen and phosphorus, and disease-causing bacteria and viruses. Nitrogen and phosphorus are aqua-

Other good reasons for safe treatment of sewage include preventing the spread of infection and disease when you consider the cost of replacing the entire system. Your system will need pumping every few 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's value and could pose a legal liability.

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

Why should I maintain my septic system?