

HOW TO CARE FOR YOUR SEPTIC SYSTEM

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 you learn how your systems work it is easy for you to appreciate the importance of a few sound operation and maintenance practices.

PUMP YOUR TANK REGULARLY (every 3 – 5 years)

- (1) Pumping your septic tank is probably the single most important thing you can do to protect your system. If the buildup of solids in the tank becomes too high and solids move to the drainfield, this could clog and strain the system to the point where a new drain field will be needed.
- (2) Inspect Your System Annually
- (3) Don't plant anything but grass near your septic system – roots from shrubs and trees can cause damage – and don't allow anyone to drive or operate heavy equipment over any part of the system. Also, don't build anything over the drainfield. Grass is the most appropriate cover for the drainfield.

USE WATER WISELY

Continual saturation of the soil in the drainfield can affect the quality of the soil and its ability to naturally remove toxins, bacteria, viruses, and other pollutants.

- (1) Immediately repair any leaking faucets or running toilets, and use washing machines and dishwashers only when full.
- (2) Try to avoid letting water run while washing hands and brushing teeth.
- (3) Avoid taking long showers and install water-saving features in faucets and shower heads. These devices can reduce water use by up to 50 percent. Use low-flush toilets.
- (4) Putting a container filled with rocks in the toilet tank can reduce water use by 25 percent.
- (5) Also, divert roof drains, surface water, and sump pumps away from the drainfield.

KNOW HOW TO FLUSH

- (1) Do not dispose of anything in your septic system that can just as easily be put in the trash.

- (2) In the kitchen avoid washing food scraps, coffee grinds, and other food items down the drain.
- (3) Grease and cooking oils contribute to the layer of scum in the tank and also should not be put down the drain.