

Septic System Do's and Don'ts

Do's:

- Know the location and capacity of your septic tank.
- Have a licensed contractor inspect the tank at least every three years.
- Have the tank pumped when the combined depth of the sludge and scum equals 1/3 of the tank liquid volume.
- Install the system so that rainfall and surface water will flow away from the drainfield.
- Only grow grass above the system.
- Install water conservation fixtures or devices to reduce the volume of water entering the system.
- Keep plumbing fixtures, such as toilets and faucets, in good repair to prevent leaks.
- Keep a maintenance record and inspect the pump (if equipped) on a regular basis.

Don'ts:

- Never flush paper towels, wipes of any kind, newspapers, tissues, or rags into the system.
- Never allow large or constant volumes of water into the system.
- Never over-use ordinary household cleaning chemicals that will be flushed into the system.
- Never pour out or empty hobby or home industry chemicals into the system.
- Never rinse grease down sink or toilet.
- Never flush toxic materials such as pesticides or pharmaceuticals into the system.
- Never plant trees or shrubbery on or near the drainfield area as roots can cause damage.
- Never allow vehicles (cars, trucks, etc.) to drive across or park on the drainfield, which crushes it and can damage components.
- Never waste water.
- Never use chemical solvents to clean plumbing lines or a septic tank system.

A properly designed, installed, and maintained septic system is an efficient method of wastewater treatment, adequately treating sewage before it mixes with ground or surface waters, protecting water quality.

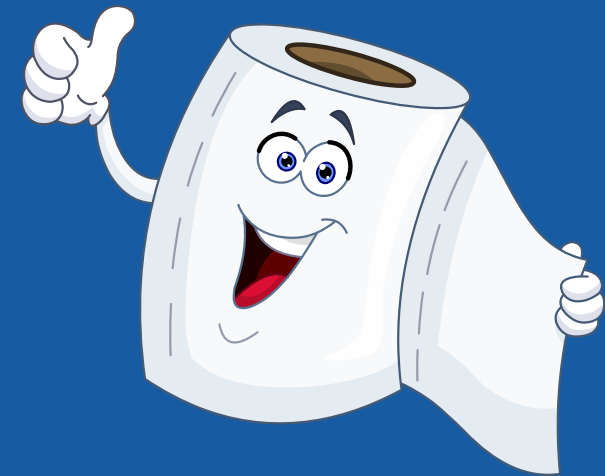


For More Information:
www.tinyurl.com/septicmart4LE
or Scan the QR code



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Be Septic Smart for Lake Erie



Lake Erie Watershed Protection Alliance

How Your Septic System Works

If you are like most homeowners, you know very little about your septic system. This is understandable, because it is underground and often "out of sight, out of mind." All household waste that goes down a drain is disposed of through your septic system.

Septic systems have two components - a **SEPTIC TANK** and a **DRAINFIELD**. The septic tank is a container, usually with two compartments, made from concrete or plastic. Wastewater from your bathroom, kitchen, and laundry room enters the septic tank through your sewer lines. Heavy solid particles settle to the bottom where bacterial action converts them to a digested sludge. Settling and breakdown of solids takes time and your tank must be large enough for complete digestion to occur.



The drainfield is the soil absorption system and consists of a distribution box, perforated distribution lines made of plastic or clay tile, and an area of soil. In the drainfield, disease causing microorganisms and some suspended solids and nutrients are removed as the liquid is absorbed by the soil. If the soil cannot absorb the liquid at the rate at which it enters the septic tank, the plumbing will "back up" or wastewater will bubble to the surface in the drainfield or at the distribution box.

Septic System Care and Maintenance

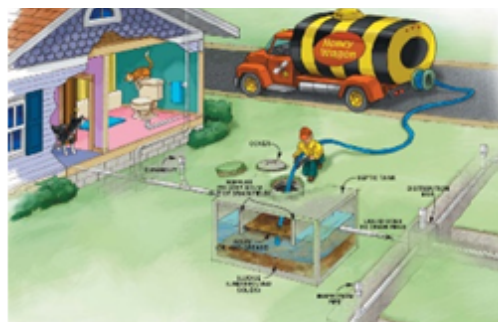
Septic system care & maintenance is quite simple.

The septic tank and drainfield are designed and installed to handle a maximum calculated daily sewage flow. You may need to expand the system if adding bedrooms to your home. Consistently exceeding the design flow will eventually overload the system and cause failure. The tank may receive new solids faster than it can treat them and the drainfield may become saturated from excessive water use. Consider using a portable toilet if entertaining a large group of people to avoid overloading the system.

Maintenance of a septic tank will depend largely on the daily sewage flow and individual household wastewater characteristics. With ordinary use and care, a septic tank should not require pumping out more than **once every three to five years**. It should, however, be inspected every couple of years to determine the depth of accumulated sludge and grease.

Waste from kitchen garbage disposal units puts an extra load on a septic tank system. If a disposal is used, the capacity of the tank should be increased to handle the increased solid wastes. The tank may also require more frequent pumping to remove accumulated solid waste buildup.

Failure to pump out a septic tank system in a timely manner will result in solids or greases overflowing into the drainfield, which in turn may become clogged and stop functioning. If this is happening, not only will the tank have to be pumped out, but the drainfield may also have to be replaced.



Drainfield Protection

- Plant only grass over and near your septic system. Roots from nearby trees or shrubs might clog and damage the drainfield.
- Do not 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, and other 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. Consider adding a storm water ditch to redirect flow if necessary.

