

# Understanding and caring for your home septic system . . . helps avoid problems.

## Daily Tips For Long Lasting, Trouble-Free Service

**How often should the septic tank be pumped?**

Every 1-3 years, when the sludge in the tank is approaching 1/3 of the liquid depth. If more than this amount of sludge builds up, this increases the solids that get into the disposal field and clog the system. To ensure regular service, keep a maintenance record of your system.

**How does the use of household water affect the system?**

The more water that is used, the more that must be disposed of by the septic system drain fields. Buy water conserving showerheads and faucets. Avoid unnecessary flushing of the stool. Wash only full loads of clothes, and fix leaky faucets. Conserve water.

**What are some the common household habits that create problems in a septic tank?**

When homeowners use their septic tank as a disposal. Grease is the worst thing in a system. Coffee grounds, bones, cooking fats, filter cigarette butts, disposable diapers, paper toweling, tissues, etc., should not be put into the system.

**Can a garbage disposal be used?**

Garbage disposals are not recommended, because the food particles fill up the septic tank faster, and tend to clog the lateral system. If a garbage disposal is used the tank must be cleaned twice as often.

**What affect does rain water run off have on the system?**

It overloads the system. Since all water must be disposed of, do not have storm or clear water from the basement or roof go into the sewage treatment system.

**What about the Use of Household Cleaning Products?**

Moderate use of bleaches, cleansers and other household products will not harm your septic tank. Avoid drain cleaners, caustics, and water softeners salt brine.

**Is there any special type of toilet paper required?**

White toilet paper designed for septic tank use is best, because there are no dyes that need to be broken down in white paper.

**What else can I do to protect the system?**

A properly designed and installed system will give you years of trouble-free service if you protect the system with good daily habits and pump the septic tank regularly.

**What Safety Precautions Should Be Taken?**

- Absolutely never go into a septic tank. Lethal gases build up in the tank that are overpowering and deadly. Call professionals if you have a problem with your system.
- Know where the manhole cover to the septic tank is located. It should be earth covered or locked at all times.
- Septic tanks that are no longer being used should be filled with earth or rock.

Important - Check with the health department in your community for local regulations and requirements concerning home septic systems.

# How Can I Insure A Trouble-Free System When Building A Home?

Before purchasing any property, consult with your local Health Department, as many counties have completed a soil evaluation by soil specialists which will reveal the characteristics of the property. If not, the county sanitarian will advise the procedures for a soil boring and percolation test. Some Health Departments will perform the percolation test for you. If a conventional system is not practical, possibly alternative systems will be recommended.

Have a professional licensed installer, or engineer, design and lay out your private septic system. The proper elevation, design, construction and maintenance will insure that the life of your septic system is prolonged. Capacity is a very important consideration. Your county sanitarian will size the tank and disposal system based on family size and soil conditions. No part of the system should be under heavily traveled areas, such as a driveway or patio, and leaching lines should be crowned to help surface water run off.

Obtain septic tank and sanitary permits. Local regulations require necessary permits before any building can begin. You should provide a sketch or plot plan for the sanitarian showing lot lines, new or existing buildings and drives, and well or cistern location.

Have a qualified, properly trained person install your system. Inspect the system regularly. Keep both a record of the complete system and a maintenance record for easy reference in the event problems occur with your system. Installers are required to be licensed in many areas.

## New Home Construction Checklist

- Obtain a soil boring and percolation test before purchasing property.
- Check with local authorities to insure compliance with local requirements.
- Properly locate the septic system.
- Have easy access to the septic tank for pumping.

## Checklist When Purchasing A Home With A Septic System

- Ask questions. Age of the system? Size of the system? Any previous problems? Ever backed into the house? Is there a maintenance record? When was the septic tank last pumped?
- Make sure the septic tank is accessible for pumping.
- Fully check the system. Locate the soil absorption field and check the grounds for seeping effluent.
- Have a professional check to make sure the septic system is properly sited.
- Determine what needs to be done, if anything, before you buy the house.

If you follow these guidelines and ask questions before you purchase or build a home, you should have a nearly trouble-free system.

## What Are The Benefits Of Precast Concrete Septic Tanks?

- water tight
- proven long life
- durability - strength increases with age
- locally produced
- cold or hot weather placement
- solid heavy weight construction



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