

Why Should I Maintain My Septic System?

Did you know that septic systems are the responsibility of you the homeowner? It is up to you to keep your system working properly to protect your environment, your health and your investment.

When properly designed, constructed and maintained, a septic system should provide long-term, effective treatment of your household wastewater. If you take good care of your system, you will save yourself the time, money and worries involved in

replacing a failed system. Failed systems can be hazardous to your health, the environment and your pocketbook. It can degrade water supplies and reduce your property value. Below are some valuable tips to ensure the longevity of your system.

A licensed sewage hauler or onsite sewage system professional should remove the septic tank cover and inspect the system every three to five years and pump out the solids and scum when required.



Do:

- familiarize yourself with the location of your system
- keep the tank access lid secured to the riser at all times
- keep an as built system diagram in a safe place for reference
- keep accurate records of septic system maintenance and service calls
- test your well water at least three times a year — spring, summer and fall — for indicator bacteria
- have your tank inspected for sludge and scum buildup on a regular basis (3-5 years) and clean out when a third of the depth of your tank is full of sludge and scum
- have your effluent filter checked and cleaned every year; if you don't have an effluent filter, consider adding one
- divert surface water away from your leaching bed
- conserve water in the house to reduce the amount of wastewater that must be treated
- repair leaky plumbing fixtures
- replace inefficient toilets with low-flush models
- consider installing a lint filter on your washing machine's discharge pipe
- spread the number of loads of laundry throughout the week



Don't:

- enter a tank — gases and lack of oxygen can be fatal
- put cooking oils or food waste down the drain
- flush hazardous chemicals, pharmaceuticals, cigarette butts or sanitary products
- use a garbage disposal unit/garburator unless your system has been designed for it
- use special additives that are claimed to enhance the performance of your tank or system — you don't need them!
- dig without knowing the location of your leaching bed
- drive or park over your tank or leaching bed
- pave over your leaching bed
- allow livestock on the leaching bed
- plant trees or shrubs too close to the septic tank or leaching bed
- connect rain gutters, storm drains, sump pumps or allow surface water to drain into a septic system
- connect leaching bed or greywater system to agricultural field drainage
- discharge water softener backwash to the septic system unless your system has been designed for it
- drain hot tub and spa water to the septic system

Ask To See The License!

Anyone in the business of pumping and cleaning septic tanks must be licensed by the Ontario Ministry of the Environment.

Anyone who installs, repairs or services septic tanks must be licensed by the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.