

CONSUMER HOW-TO MAINTAIN YOUR SEPTIC SYSTEM

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For many homeowners, a septic system may be a hidden utility on the property. Although it is not usually noticeable above ground besides the risers or mounds, it is necessary have it maintained regularly. If it is not maintained properly, a malfunction can become very costly and may contaminate the surrounding soil and ground water.

A septic system provides treatment and disposal of liquid household wastes. Any wastewater from the home is processed through the system. The septic tank is the first step for decomposition of any solid material that enters the septic system. The solids settle in the tank and any grease or oil floats to the surface (sludge and scum). Water then exits the tank and enters the drainfield. Microbes in the soil remove most contaminants from the wastewater before it exits the septic system.

Annual inspections of the septic system are recommended to ensure it and working properly and determining when the septic tank will need pumped. An inspection includes locating the system, uncovering access holes, flushing toilets,

checking for signs of back up, measuring sludge and scum layers, identifying any leaks, inspecting mechanical components, and pumping the tank if necessary. If properly sized for the occupants in the house, septic tanks can safely store up to three years of sludge and scum.

There are a number of preventative measures that can protect your septic system.

- Conserve water when ever possible
- Prevent system overload by spacing laundry cycles.
- Have your septic tank pumped before you leave for summer vacation
- Limit the use of your kitchen garbage disposal and any food items going down the drain
- Do not flush or dispose of any harsh chemicals down the drains
- Do not flush anything that is not biodegradable
- Do not plant any deep rooted plants or trees in or around the septic tank and absorption area
- Do not allow any heavy equipment on the absorption area