

Care and Maintenance of On-site and Neighborhood WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEMS

OUTDOOR TIPS

- ✓ **Don't park or drive over the drain field.** The pipes are just under the surface, and heavy vehicles can compact the dirt and crush the lines.
- ✓ **Don't build or plant near the tank or drain field** without checking with a septic professional first. Roots and digging can damage pipes and lead to expensive repairs.

MAINTENANCE FOR ON-SITE SYSTEMS

- ✓ **Have your system checked every 1-3 years** for leaks or damage, especially if your household uses a lot of water.
- ✓ **Get your septic tank pumped every 3-5 years**, depending on how many people live in your home and how often the system is used.

INDOOR TIPS

- ✓ **Don't pour food scraps or grease down the sink.** Even with a garbage disposal, things like coffee grounds, eggshells, and oil can build up in your tank over time and cause problems.
- ✓ **Only flush toilet paper and human waste.** "Flushable" wipes aren't safe for your system—they're one of the top causes of clogged pipes.
- ✓ **Don't pour chemicals down the drain.** Paint, bleach, disinfectants, pesticides, and other harsh chemicals disrupt the water treatment process and can create big problems in the future.
- ✓ **Be cautious with septic additives.** Check your system's guidelines before using any cleaners or treatments.
- ✓ **Avoid using the garbage disposal.** It adds more solids to the tank than your system is built to handle.
- ✓ **Don't strain your drain.** Stagger your laundry and dishwashing cycles to avoid overloading the wastewater system.

What are the signs that indicate an on-site septic system may be failing?

SLOW DRAINS: If sinks, tubs, or toilets are draining slowly, especially throughout the house, it could mean your system is backed up.

BAD SMELLS: A strong sewage odor inside or outside your home, especially near the drain field or septic tank, can be a red flag.

SEWAGE BACKUP: If sewage is backing up into your toilets, sinks, or tubs, call a professional immediately.

STANDING WATER OR WET SPOTS: Standing water in your yard near the tank or drain field, especially when it hasn't rained, can signal a leak or overflow in the system.

FAST GROWING GRASS OVER THE DRAIN FIELD: Grass that looks unusually green and grows faster than the rest of your yard may be getting extra "fertilizer" from a leaking system.

GURGLING SOUNDS: If you hear gurgling from drains or toilets, it could mean there's a blockage or backup forming.