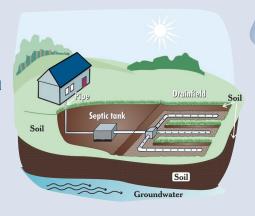
Y_{ouv} septic system is your responsibility!

id you know that as a homeowner you're responsible for maintaining your septic system? Did you know that maintaining your septic system protects your investment in your home? Did you know that you should periodically inspect your system and pump out your septic tank?

If properly designed, constructed, and maintained, your septic system can provide long-term, effective treatment of household wastewater. If your septic system isn't maintained, you might need to replace it, costing you thousands of dollars. A malfunctioning system can contaminate groundwater that might be a source of drinking water. And if you sell your home, your septic system must be in good working order.



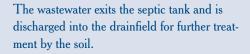
rotect Your Septic System

- 1 Inspect your system (every 3 years) and pump your tank as necessary (generally every 3 to 5 years).
- 2 Use water efficiently.
- 3 Don't dispose of household hazardous wastes in sinks or toilets.
- 4 Care for your drainfield. Avoid driving or parking vehicles on your drainfield. Plant only grass over and near your drainfield to avoid damage from roots.

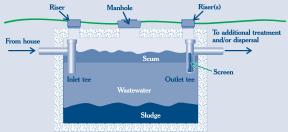
How does it work?

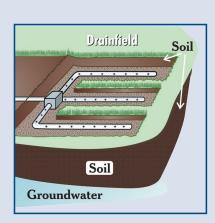
A typical septic system has four main components: a pipe from the home, a septic tank, a drainfield, and the soil. Microbes in the soil digest or remove most contaminants from wastewater before it eventually reaches groundwater.

The septic tank is a buried,
watertight container typically made
of concrete, fiberglass, or polyethylene. It holds the wastewater long
enough to allow solids to settle out
(forming sludge) and oil and grease
to float to the surface (as scum). It
also allows partial decomposition of
the solid materials. Compartments
and a T-shaped outlet in the septic
tank prevent the sludge and scum from leaving
the tank and traveling into the drainfield area.
Screens are also recommended to keep solids
from entering the drainfield.



Microorganisms in the soil provide final treatment by removing harmful bacteria, viruses, and nutrients.





How do I maintain my septic system?

Pump frequently

You should have your septic system inspected at least every 3 years by a professional and your tank pumped as necessary (generally every 3 to 5 years).

Use water efficiently

Average indoor water use in the typical single-family home is almost 70 gallons per person per day.

Dripping faucets can waste about 2,000 gallons of water each year. Leaky toilets can waste as much as 200 gallons each day. The more water a household

conserves, the less water enters the septic system.



Flush responsibly

Dental floss, feminine hygiene products, condoms, diapers, cotton swabs, cigarette butts, coffee grounds, cat litter, paper towels, and other kitchen and bathroom items can clog and potentially damage septic system components. Flushing

household chemicals, gasoline, oil, pesticides, antifreeze, and paint can stress or destroy the biological treatment taking place in the system or might contaminate surface waters and groundwater.

se Water Efficiently!

- Fill the bathtub with only as much water as you need
- Turn off faucets while shaving or brushing your teeth
- Run the dishwasher and clothes washer only when they're full
- Use toilets to flush sanitary waste only (not kitty litter, diapers, or other trash)
- Make sure all faucets are completely turned off when not in use
- Maintain your plumbing to eliminate leaks
- Install aerators in the faucets in your kitchen and bathroom
- Replace old dishwashers, toilets, and clothes washers with new, high-efficiency models

For more information on water conservation, please visit www.epa.gov/owm/waterefficiency

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your property's value and could pose a legal liability. in the house and the size of the system. An unusable septic system or one in disrepair will lower system. Your system will need pumping every δ to δ years, depending on how many people live inspected (at least every 3 years) is a bargain when you consider the cost of replacing the entire sive to repair or replace, and poor maintenance is often the culprit. Having your septic system A key reason to maintain your septic system is to save money! Failing septic systems are expen-

will effectively remove most of these pollutants. contact or ingestion of contaminated water or shellfish. If a septic system is working properly, it drome) in infancy. Pathogens can cause communicable diseases through direct or indirect body can cause pregnancy complications, as well as methemoglobinemia (also known as blue baby synplant nutrients that can cause unsightly algae blooms. Excessive nitrate-nitrogen in drinking water phosphorus, and disease-causing bacteria and viruses. Vitrogen and phosphorus are aquatic disease and protecting water resources. Typical pollutants in household wastewater are nitrogen, Other good reasons for safe treatment of sewage include preventing the spread of infection and

ow to treat your drainfield

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- Plant only grass over and near your septic system. Roots from nearby trees or shrubs might clog and damage the drainfield.
- system components. or damage the pipe Don't drive or park vehicles on any part of your septic system. Doing so can
- can canse blumbing fixtures to back up. drainfield with excessive water slows down or stops treatment processes and surface water drainage systems away from the drainfield. Flooding the Keep roof drains, basement sump pump drains, and other rainwater or



For more information, contact your local health department or visit www.epa.gov/owm/onsite



