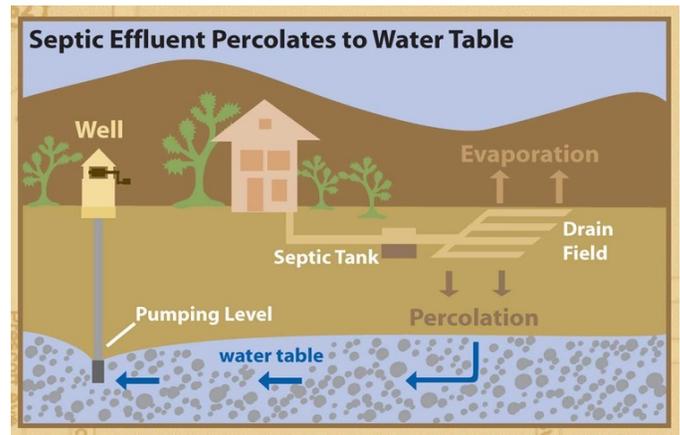


Fact Sheet Septic Systems & Water Quality



Septic Systems: Your Personal Waste Water Treatment Facility

How a Septic System Works

A septic system has two main components: a septic tank and an absorption area (ie; leach field). The tank is buried about six feet deep and away from the building where wastewater is held. The wastewater eventually allows solids to settle down to the bottom forming sludge, while the oil and grease floats to the top as scum.

Bacteria in the tank helps to break down solids, but chemicals, viruses, and other contaminants remain in the liquid effluent. Soil can act as a natural filter, but most of the liquid will seep down into the groundwater from the absorption field.

Out of Sight, Out of Mind

It might be time to call for an inspection if it has been more than 3 years since the last inspection. The average household septic should be pumped out every 3-5 years. This may vary according to the size of the tank, and the number of occupants in your home.

Sure Signs That Your Tank Needs Attention

- You suddenly have waterfront property due to pooling around the drain field. This could mean the system is overflowing.
- Slow moving drains, and slow flushing toilets may mean there is a clog, especially if it continues after using a septic-friendly drain cleaner.
- Unpleasant odors in your yard are a clue.
- If the lawn looks really **GREEN** and lush, but only in the septic bed area, it could be an indication that the tank is leaching liquids.
- Sewer back-up—time to call the professionals.

Avoid Trouble

- Routine maintenance schedule; stick to it!
- Don't use your septic system as trash disposal.
- No paints, chemicals, medications, pesticides, or oils down the drains.
- Reconsider use of a garbage disposal.
- Maintain septic drain field—don't park on it, plant trees on it, and keep any drainage away from it.



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Find out more at

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