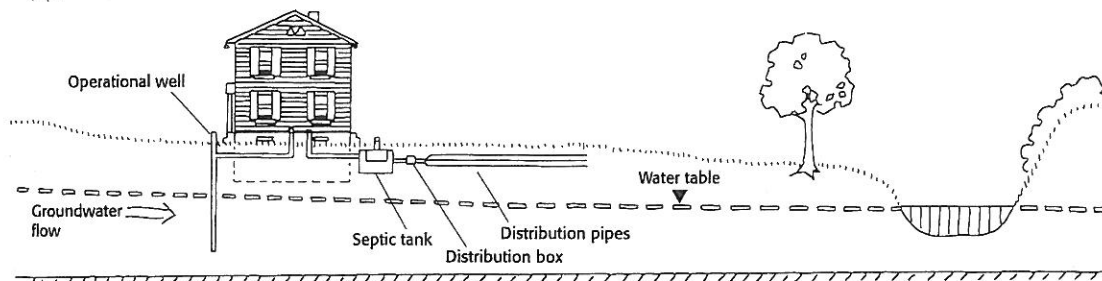


Information and Guidelines for Your Septic System

# Septic System Records

Property owner and location: \_\_\_\_\_



For your health, your family's health, and to protect the environment, you need to know how your septic system functions and how to maintain it. Keeping records is an essential part of a maintenance program.

**Folder Contents:**

- Permit application
- Certification letter
- System "as built" drawing
- Permit

**Property Service Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Installing Contractor:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Date System Installed:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**System Description:**

Septic tank size: \_\_\_\_\_

Leach field location: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Absorption Area Type:**

- trenches       mound
- bed               drip irrigation
- evapotranspiration
- other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Method of Application:**

- gravity       dosed

**Accessories:**

- outlet filter       pump
- diversion valve
- dosing tank       siphon
- distribution box
- other: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# The Workings of a Septic System:

A septic system is an individual wastewater treatment system using soil to treat small wastewater flows from a home or small group of homes. There are two parts to a conventional system:

- a septic tank and
- an absorption or “leach” field.

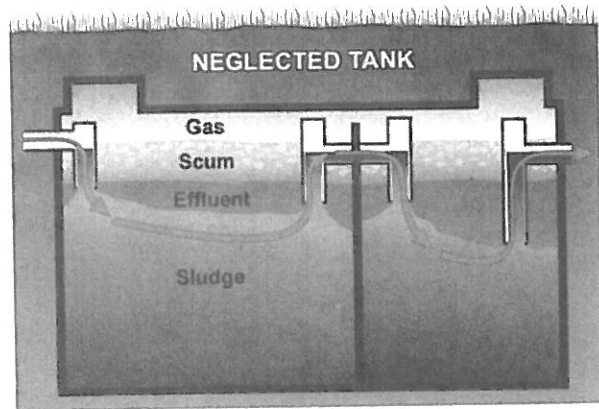
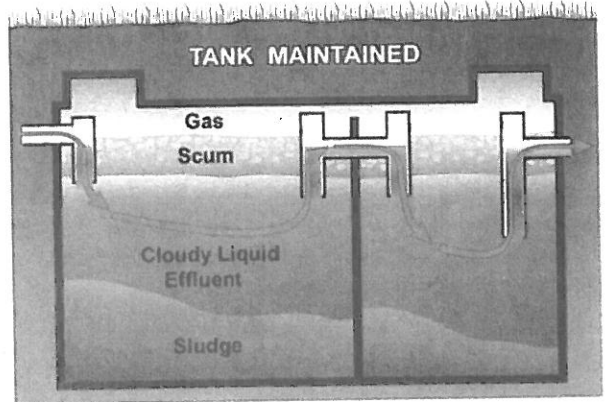
## Septic Tank:

This is the first stage of treatment. All the water used in your home (if no graywater system) is diverted to this underground tank. It is a watertight container, usually made of concrete.

How often your tank should be pumped (in years)

Tank Size (gallons)	Number of people in your household					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1000	12	6	4	3	2	2
1250	16	8	5	3	3	2
1500	19	9	6	4	3	3

The size of the tank is based on the number of bedrooms in your home. Wastewater is temporarily held in the septic tank while heavy solids settle out. These solids are partly decomposed by bacteria. This is the primary treatment for your wastewater, and for proper functioning it is important to pump the tank on a regular basis, or about every four years. See your local health department for specific regulations.



## Absorption Field:

The absorption field (or leach field) is excavated at the time of installation, and filled with rock or other porous material. Effluent (the liquid left after the solids have settled out) flows from the septic tank into pipes going throughout the absorption field. These pipes will usually have tiny holes in them to allow the effluent to seep into the gravel and then into the soil. This is the second stage in the water treatment process. Nutrients, organic materials, and pollutants in the effluent are held by the soil and are digested by soil microbes.

---

## Engineered Systems:

A conventional system is not always the best approach. Some sites require special engineering because of inappropriate soils, shallow bedrock, or a high groundwater table. Engineered systems require professional design and installation. These systems include:

- evapotranspiration
- sand filters
- trickling filter systems
- drip irrigation
- recirculating sand filters
- mounded systems
- aerobic systems

Your installer will have tips for the operation and maintenance of these special systems.

## Maintenance:

It is important to inspect your tank annually for sludge level and structural integrity. Pump your tank at least every four years, or more often if required by your health department. The costs for inspection and pumping are \$50 to \$250 as compared to \$3,000 to \$12,000 for a new system.

### Control the amount of water discharged into your system:

Extend your absorption field's life by controlling the amount of water it must absorb and treat:

- divert runoff
- conserve indoor water
- repair leaks
- do not water the grass over your leach field
- space indoor washing over the week

### Do NOT allow the entry of these materials into your septic system:

- strong and toxic chemicals
- latex paint
- water with high suspended solids, such as water used in a ceramics studio or sheet rock mud. The solids in this water will not settle out, and will ultimately clog the leachfield pores.
- household items such as facial tissues, tampons, cigarette butts, egg shells, bones, cooking grease, etc. They will not decompose in your septic tank and will require pumping more often.

### Moderate use of these materials is fine:

- bleach
- drain cleaner
- soaps and detergents

### Additives:

Additives have not been consistently shown to be effective in either restoring a septic system or

decreasing the need for pumping. It is more effective to save the money you might spend on these chemicals and put it towards pumping out the tank.

### Absorption Field:

The absorption field works by water infiltrating through the soil pores. The field will not

#### Signs of Failure:

If you smell sewage, or see a sunken, wet spot in your lawn, or a place of lush growth, your septic system may be malfunctioning. Call a professional immediately, as septic system failure is costly, and a new site for a replacement system may not be available on your property.

function correctly if compacted or disturbed by tree roots. Do not park on top of your absorption field or drive over the top, as this results in compaction. Do not plant a vegetable garden or plants with woody roots, such as shrubs or trees, over the field, as

these will interfere with the pipes. Native grasses are a good choice, as these do not require watering. Do not build over the top of your septic system, as this will inhibit proper functioning, inspection, and pumping. Some professionals recommend two leachfields for a longer system life. You may alternate the use of these, switching every year.

## Avoid the mess! DOs and DON'Ts:

### DO:

- know where your system is located!
- have your system inspected every year
- pump out septic tank every four years
- keep records of pumping, inspection, and other maintenance
- repair leaking faucets and toilets
- conserve water to reduce wastewater
- divert roof drains and surface water away from absorption field
- call a professional when you have questions
- obtain required health permits before making changes or repairs on your system

### DON'T

- drive or park over any part of your septic system
- dig or build on top of your septic system
- plant deep-rooted plants over the absorption field
- flush non-biodegradable items into your system
- dump harmful chemicals down the drain
- do a self-inspection
- breathe emitted tank gasses – these are toxic!
- install a garbage disposal

**Important Phone Numbers:**

**Maintenance:**

Plumber name: \_\_\_\_\_ phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Pumper name: \_\_\_\_\_ phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Health:**

County Health phone: \_\_\_\_\_

State Health phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Water testing laboratory name: \_\_\_\_\_ phone: \_\_\_\_\_

address: \_\_\_\_\_

**General Questions:**

State water quality phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Local extension agent name: \_\_\_\_\_ phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Maintenance Record:**

Date	Work Performed and Comments	Contractor	Cost