

In order to maintain a healthy lake

SEPTIC SYSTEM MAINTENANCE IS ESSENTIAL

Properly designed septic systems are capable of treating domestic wastewater to a higher level of quality than many municipal wastewater treatment plants. However, in order to do so, they must be properly maintained and managed. One element of management is regular tank inspection to determine the need for septic tank pumping. The Lake Control Committee is investigating this aspect of septic system management and will address this issue in the near future.

Another very important element of septic system maintenance is proper use of the system. Your septic tank is not a dispose-all. Listed below is a simplified list of do's and don'ts for your system:

Do's

- Learn the location of your septic tank, disposal field (also known as drain or leach field), and well. Make a sketch and keep it with your maintenance records.
- Conserve water to avoid overloading the system. Repair leaky faucets and toilets. Use low flow plumbing fixtures. Avoid partial loads in washing machines and dishwashers. Check toilets for leaks annually by putting a few drops of food coloring into the toilet tank. If colored water appears in the bowl, then your toilet is leaking.
- Limit other sources of water entering your system:
 - Prevent basement or crawl space sump pump and drain connections to the tank.
 - Prevent roof, foundation, driveway and water softener discharge from entering the tank or draining onto the disposal field area. Salt from water softeners is of particular concern as it can be toxic to your septic system.
- Use commercial bathroom cleaners, bleaches and laundry detergents in moderation. Mild detergents or baking soda are good alternative cleaners.
- Cut the grass over the disposal field.
- Take leftover hazardous household chemicals to an approved waste collection system for disposal. These include paints, varnish, thinners, oils, pesticides, herbicides, gasoline and kerosene.
- Avoid use of kitchen garbage disposals. Dispose of as much solid waste as possible in your garbage.

Don'ts

- Don't use caustic drain cleaners for a clogged drain. Boiling water or a drain snake are two alternatives.
- Don't use commercial septic tank additives or cleansers, or home remedies such as yeast, sugar, etc. in your septic system. These are not necessary and some may be harmful to your system.
- Don't pour grease or fats down your drains. Keep a waste grease jar in your refrigerator and dispose of with your garbage when full.
- Don't allow heavy vehicles, including cars, to drive over or park on the drain field.
- Don't plant trees or shrubs on the drain field.
- Don't cover the drain field with hard surfaces such as concrete, asphalt, decks, etc. The area should only be covered with grass.
- Don't dispose of leftover pharmaceuticals in your septic system. Dispose with your solid waste (garbage) or at a drug take-back program (i.e. law enforcement agencies frequently partner with drug enforcement agencies for National Prescription Take-Back Day).
- Don't use your toilet or drain like a trash can. Don't flush coffee grounds, diapers, feminine hygiene products, Kleenex, "flushable" wipes, dental floss, paper towels, tobacco products, kitty litter condoms, fat, grease or oil. In short, nothing but body waste and toilet paper should be flushed.

Septic systems are a simple and very effective way to treat household wastewater. They are also easy to operate and maintain. However, it is essential that homeowners take an active role in maintaining their systems.

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