## **Important Contact Information**

#### Maintenance

| Plumber                  | <br> | <br> |
|--------------------------|------|------|
|                          |      |      |
| Pumper                   |      |      |
|                          |      |      |
| Health                   |      |      |
| Local/County Health Dept | <br> | <br> |
| State Health Dept.       |      |      |
| Water testing laboratory |      |      |

#### **General Questions**

| itate water quality agency |
|----------------------------|
| ocal Extension office      |

#### Maintenance and Pumping Record

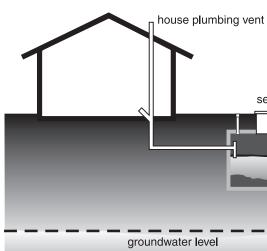
| Date | Work Performed and Comments | Contractor | Cost |
|------|-----------------------------|------------|------|
|      |                             |            |      |
|      |                             |            |      |
|      |                             |            |      |
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#### For more information, please visit www.region8water.org

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Property owner and location



For you and 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  | System Description             |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Permit application                                     | Septic tank size               |
| Certification letter System "as built" drawing and map | Drain field location           |
| 🖵 Permit   | Treatment Area Type            |
|  | □ trenches □ leach/drain field |
| Property Service Address                               | 🗆 mound 🛛 🖵 drip irrigation    |
|  | absorption bed  other          |
|  | Effluent to drain field via    |
| Installing Contractor Contact Information              | □ gravity □ pumped             |
|  | Accessories                    |
|  | distribution box  utlet filter |
|  | pump     diversion valve       |
|  | 🖵 dosing tank 🛛 🗖 siphon       |
|  | ultraviolet radiation          |
|  | 🗅 other                        |
| Date System Installed                                  |                                |

# Information and Guidelines for Your Septic System

# Septic System Records

| septic tank | drainfield                     |
|-------------|--------------------------------|
|             | soil biological treatment area |
|             |                                |
|             |                                |

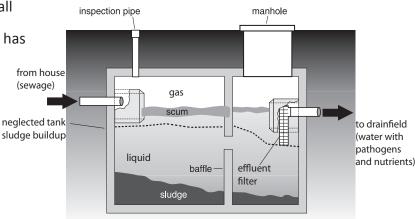
## The Workings of a Septic System

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

- septic tank
- drain 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.



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

#### **Table 1. Recommended Pumping Tank Intervals**

Number of people in your household

|           | 1   | 2      | 3      | 4                 | 5     | 6    |
|-----------|-----|--------|--------|-------------------|-------|------|
| Tank size | How | / ofte | n your | <sup>-</sup> tank | shoul | d be |
| (gallons) |     | pur    | nped   | (in ye            | ars)  |      |
| 1,000     | 12  | 6      | 4      | 3                 | 2     | 2    |
| 1,250     | 16  | 8      | 5      | 3                 | 3     | 2    |
| 1,500     | 19  | 9      | 6      | 4                 | 3     | 3    |

#### **Drain Field**

The drain 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 drain field. These pipes 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
- recirculating sand filters mounded systems
- trickling filter systems • aerobic systems
- drip irrigation

sand filters

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

#### Maintenance

You must inspect your tank annually for sludge level and structural integrity and pump your tank according to the recommended intervals (Table 1). The costs for inspection and pumping are \$50 to \$250, compared with \$3,000 to \$12,000 for a new system.

#### Control the amount of water discharged in your system

To extend your drain field's life by controlling amount of water it must absorb and treat:

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

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

- strong and toxic chemicals
- latex paint
- water with high suspended solids, such water used in a ceramics studio or shee mud. The solids in this water will not se and ultimately will clog the leach field
- household items, such as facial tissues. tampons, disposable wipes, cigarette be shells, bones, cooking grease, etc. They decompose in your septic tank and the system will require pumping more often

## DOs and DON'Ts

#### DO

- know where your system is located
- have your system inspected every year
- pump out septic tank as per recomm in Table 1
- keep records of pumping, inspection maintenance
- repair leaking faucets and toilets
- install washing machine lint and efflu
- conserve water to reduce wastewate
- divert roof drains and surface water a drain field
- call a professional when you have que
- obtain required permits before makir changes or repairs to your system

| nto   | Moderate use of t <ul> <li>bleach</li> </ul>  |
|---|---|
| ng the  | <ul> <li>drain cleaner</li> <li>soaps and det</li> </ul>  |
| field<br>week<br>s <b>into</b>  | Additives<br>Additives have not<br>consistently in eith<br>or decreasing the<br>effective to save th<br>these chemicals an<br>the tank.   |
| as<br>etrock<br>ettle out<br>pores.<br>outts, egg<br>y will not<br>septic<br>n. | Drain Field<br>The drain field wo<br>the soil pores. The<br>if tree roots compa-<br>top of your drain f<br>this results in com<br>garden or plants w<br>or trees, over the<br>with the pipes. Na<br>because these do<br>build on top of you |

# these materials is fine:

tergents

t been shown to be effective ner restoring a septic system need for pumping. It is more he money you might spend on nd put it towards pumping out

rks by water infiltrating through e field will not function correctly act or disturb it. Do not park on field or drive over the top because paction. Do not plant a vegetable vith woody roots, such as shrubs field because these will interfere tive grasses are a good choice not require watering. Do not ur septic system because this will inhibit proper functioning, inspection and pumping. Some professionals recommend two drain fields for a longer system life. You may alternate the use of these fields, switching every year.

|                | DON'T  |
|----------------|--|
| ar             | <ul> <li>drive or park over any part of your septic<br/>system</li> </ul>  |
| endations      | <ul> <li>dig or build on top of your septic system</li> <li>plant deep-rooted plants over the drain field</li> </ul>   |
| and other      | <ul> <li>flush nonbiodegradable items into your system</li> <li>dump harmful chemicals down the drain</li> <li>breathe emitted tank gasses – these are toxic!</li> </ul> |
| ent filters    | • install a garbage disposal   |
| r<br>away from | <ul> <li>ignore odors, wet or sunken spots, or lush<br/>growth above the drain field</li> </ul>  |
| estions<br>ng  |  |
|                |  |