

LANDOWNER'S SURVEY:

WHAT'S THE RISK TO YOUR WATER FROM YOUR SEPTIC SYSTEM?

Utah Farmstead Assessment for Ground Water and Surface Water Protection

Survey 6

WQFA-13

Most homes in rural Utah use a septic system or similar on-site wastewater treatment system. While these systems are generally economical and safe, household wastewater can contain contaminants that degrade water quality for drinking, stock watering, food preparation and cleaning.

Potential contaminants in household wastewater include household chemicals, disease-causing bacteria or viruses and nutrients such as nitrate. Unless designed and managed properly, your septic system is a potential source of dangerous contaminants to groundwater including your well water and to surface water.

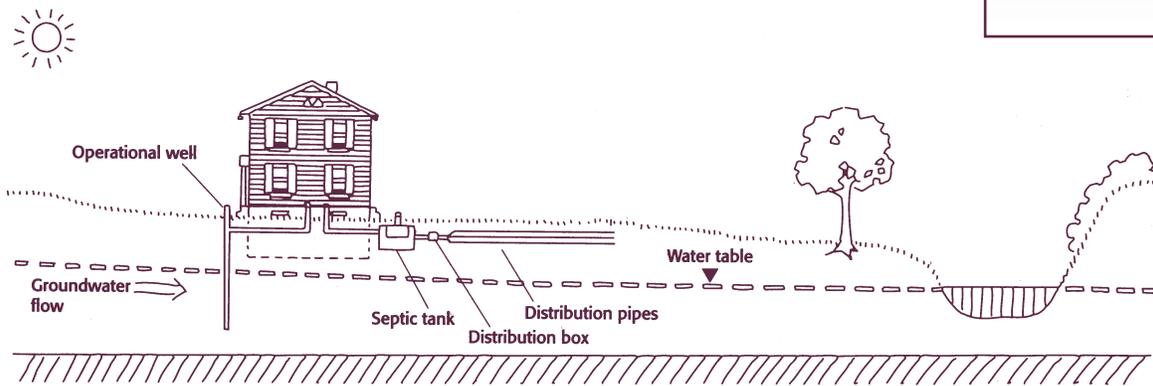
INSIDE:

USING THIS SURVEY

TAKE THE SURVEY

ASSESSING YOUR RISK

INTERPRETING YOUR RISK



HOW TO USE THIS SURVEY

This survey will help you identify some common risks that household wastewater systems pose to drinking and surface water on your farmstead or acreage. The survey asks a series of questions about specific practices or conditions that should be addressed to reduce risk of water contamination.

The results of this survey are intended to provide general information and recommendations regarding practices and potential risks to water quality. Keep this survey as your private record and use it as a guide to taking action to reduce risks.



See Glossary in Fact Sheet #6 for clarification of terms in this survey.

SURVEY INSTRUCTIONS

For each question circle the answer that best describes your situation. At the end of each section sum the numbers that correspond to each answer. When you have completed the survey, sum the section totals for the total risk assessment score.

Quantity and Quality of Wastewater

1. What is your daily water use per person per day?
(Average is about 40 gallons/person)

- Less than 25 gallons (1)
- Between 25 to 100 gallons (2)
- Greater than 100 gallons (3)

2. Do any of your water fixtures drip or leak?

- No (1)
- Yes (2)

3. Do you have any water conserving fixtures?

- Yes (1)
- No (3)

4. How many times a week is your water softener set to recharge?

- Don't have a water softener or recharged off site (1)
- Twice a week or less (2)
- More than twice a week (3)

5. Approximately how many times do you use your kitchen garbage disposal per week?

- Never, don't have one (0)
- 1 or 3 times per week (2)
- 4 or more times per week (3)

6. How much household chemical supplies (cleaners or detergents) do you add to your wastewater?

- None (0)
- Cups per week (2)
- Quarts or more per week (3)

7. Do you use solvents and/or toxic cleaning agents that enter your wastewater?

- No (0)
- Yes, but use is minimal (2)
- Yes, use is extensive (3)

8. Do you wipe oils and grease from dishes before washing?

- Yes (oils are never washed down drains) (1)
- Sometimes (minimal oils washed down drains) (2)
- No (all cooking grease and oil is washed down drains) (3)

9. Do you dispose of solid trash (tissues, sanitary products, etc) in your toilet?

- Never (1)
- Sometimes (2)
- Often (3)

Quantity and Quality of wastewater section total: _____



Collection and Pretreatment of Wastewater

10. Select the answer that best describes your collection system.

- All wastewater and some clear water are collected for treatment: no leaks (1)
- Some wastewater is diverted or some leakage occurs and/or some clear water infiltration (2)
- Substantial leakage loss of wastewater and/or substantial clear water infiltration (3)

11. How far is your collection system (pipe) from your well?
More than 50 feet (1)
Less than 50 feet (3)

If your wastewater discharges directly to the surface, ditch or a stream, STOP here. The risk is HIGH. Surface discharge of untreated effluent is a violation of Utah Code. You should make plans to correct this immediately. If your wastewater goes to a septic tank continue.

12. Circle the response that best describes your septic tank system.

- Tank more than 50 feet from well (1)
- Tank located 26 to 50 feet from well (2)
- Less than 24 feet from well (3)

13. Circle the response that best describes your septic tank system.

- Pumped every 3 years, baffles and tank inspected regularly (1)
- Pumped every 4 to 6 years (2)
- Tank pumped every 7 or more years (3)

14. What kind of septic system do you have?

- Serial tank or added solids retention system (1)
- Single tank (2)
- Cesspool or direct discharge system (3)

Collection and Pretreatment of Wastewater

section total: _____

Disposal of Wastewater (Liquid Waste Disposal)

15. What system of subsurface application of liquid waste do you use?

- Trench system (1)
- Cesspool, dry well, seepage pit or bed (2)
- Groundwater or field drain (3)

16. What is the texture of the soil at the liquid waste application site?

- Loam (1)
- Clay (2)
- Sand (3)

17. Is your liquid disposal area downslope from your well?

- Yes (1)
- No (3)

18. Is your liquid waste disposal seepage device more than 100 feet from your well?

- Yes (1)
- No (3)

19. Do you apply the liquid waste at a rate below, equal to or above the design capacity of the system?

- Below (1)
- Equal (2)
- Above or uncertain (3)

20. Do you have seasonal problems with slow operation and wet areas in the yard or effluent discharge area?

- No (1)
- Yes (3)

21. Does liquid wastewater ever come to the land surface or ditches?

- No (1)
- Yes (3)

22. Do you dispose of the solid sludge portion of wastewater on your farmstead or acreage?

- No (1)
- Yes (3)

Disposal of Wastewater section total: _____

