

A Guide to Your Septic System

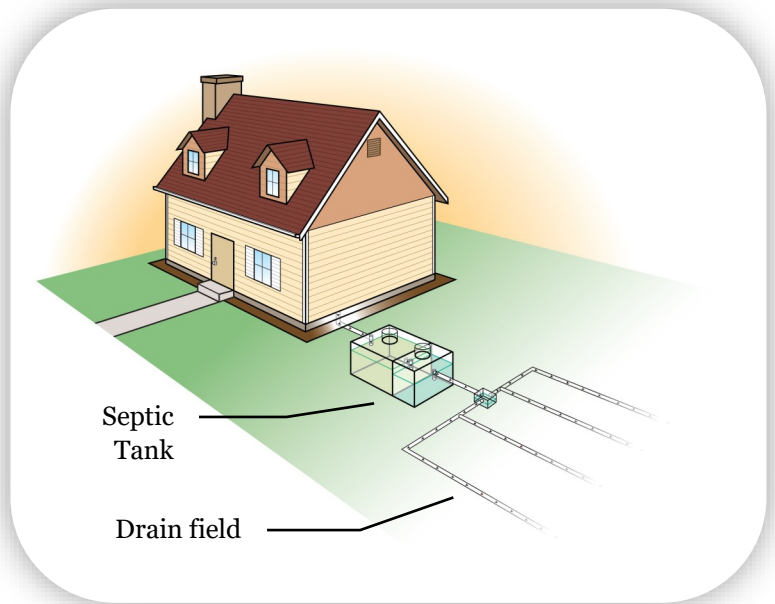
YOUR SEPTIC SYSTEM IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

Homes and businesses that are not served by public sewers depend on onsite wastewater (sewage) treatment systems to treat and dispose of everything that goes down the drain. These systems are most commonly known as SEPTIC SYSTEMS.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

There are two main parts to the basic septic system: the septic tank and the drain field. Wastewater first flows into a septic tank where heavy solids settle to the bottom, while oils and grease float to the surface. Naturally occurring bacteria work to break down the solids, oils, and grease.

Wastewater exits the septic tank and is discharged into the drain field for further treatment by naturally occurring bacteria in the soil.



WHY SHOULD I MAINTAIN MY SYSTEM?

Routine maintenance is less expensive than emergency repairs and much cheaper than total system replacement and connection to the public sewer if it is nearby. Replacing a system can cost from \$3,000 to \$10,000, compared to \$100 to \$300 per year costs for regular maintenance.

Another reason is the health of your family, environment, and community. When systems are not maintained, inadequately treated wastewater is released into your drain field and then the environment. This can spread diseases by contaminating the groundwater or waterways and attracting mosquitos.

What Does an Inspection Include?

- Locating the system
- Uncovering access holes
- Flushing Toilets
- Checking for signs of back up
- Measure solids
- Identifying any leaks
- Inspecting mechanical
- Pump tank if necessary

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HOW DO I MAINTAIN MY SYSTEM?

You should have your system inspected every 1 to 2 years by a licensed professional.

Your septic tank should be pumped by a licensed professional every 3 to 5 years depending on the number of persons in your household and the size of the system.

CARE FOR YOUR DRAIN FIELD

Your drain field is an important part of your system. Remember to:

- ◆ Plant only grass over and near your septic system. Roots from trees or shrubs can cause damage.
- ◆ Don't drive or park vehicles on any part of your septic system.
- ◆ Keep roof drains and stormwater run-off away.

WARNING SIGNS

If you notice the following, please consult with your licensed professional:

- ◆ Pooling or muddy soil around your system
- ◆ Odors in the drain field area
- ◆ Slow-draining fixtures
- ◆ Gurgling sounds in the plumbing system
- ◆ Frequent back-ups
- ◆ Patterns in the grass at drain field.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

County of San Diego Septic Systems, (858) 565-5173

www.epa.gov/septic

www.septiclocator.org

City of Vista Water Quality Hotline (760) 643-2804 or waterquality@cityofvista.com

DO NOT FLUSH:

- ◆ "Flushable" Wipes
- ◆ Diapers
- ◆ Cat Litter
- ◆ Coffee Grounds
- ◆ Feminine hygiene products
- ◆ Drain cleaners
- ◆ Kitchen Grease
- ◆ Dental Floss
- ◆ Pharmaceuticals
- ◆ Motor Vehicle Fluids
- ◆ Food Scraps from Garbage Disposal
- ◆ Pesticides

