

Septic Systems Do's and Don'ts

Do's

- Do spread automatic washer use over the week rather than many loads on one day.
- Do make a permanent record of where the key parts of your system are located for future maintenance; such as tank pump outs or field repairs.
- Do have your septic tank pumped out regularly (every 3-5 years).
- Do keep the records of pump outs and maintenance.
- Do use water-conserving devices where possible. Low flush toilets and showers heads are commonly available.
- Do have manually cleaned lint traps on your automatic washer.
- Do check any pumps, siphons, or other moving parts of your system regularly.
- Do remove or prevent trees with large root systems growing near the disposal field.
- Do maintain a healthy grass cover over the disposal field to use some of the water and to prevent erosion.
- Do keep surface water from upslope or from roof drains away from the disposal field.
- Do check your interceptor drain regularly to ensure that it is free flowing.
- Do compost your kitchen waste. A garbage grinder should be installed only when the septic tank is oversized, and the tank will need to be pumped more often.

Don'ts

- Don't overload the system with high volumes of water. Don't connect basement sump pumps to the on-site system. Don't connect backwash from water treatment devices directly to the on-site system without professional advice. Don't allow large amounts of fats, chemicals or solvents to enter the system; don't allow any plastics to enter.
- Do not use any septic tank additives. They are not beneficial and may damage your disposal system. Active bacteria are naturally present in sewage. Even with additives, regular pumping of solids is still required.
- Do not enter a septic tank without proper ventilation. A second person is required to be present above ground and other requirements by law are met for confined spaces. Sewer gases can be fatal.
- Do not allow vehicles or heavy equipment to drive over or park on the disposal field. This may compact the soil and crush the piping.
- Do not plant anything over the disposal field except grass. Especially do not cover the tank or field with asphalt or concrete or other impermeable material.
 - Do not put in a separate pipe to carry wash waters to a side ditch or woods. These "greywaters" also contain disease carrying organisms.
- Above all else: DO NOT wait for signs of failure. Check the system regularly.
- Do not flush the following items into your septic system:

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| • Coffee grounds | • Pills and unused Medication | • Pesticides |
| • Disposable diapers | • Dental floss | • Other chemical wastes |
| • Sanitary napkins | • Kitty litter | • Paints |
| • Cigarette butts | • Tampons | • Varnishes |
| • Fats, grease and oils | • Condoms | • Waste oils |
| • Disinfectants | • Paper towels | • Poisons |
| • Photographic chemicals | | • Thinners |