

## AEROBIC SYSTEM DO's and DON'Ts

**DO:** Maintain the contract service arrangement offered by the manufacturer after the initial two-year period has expired (unless your community offers its own management program). It is very important that aerobic systems get regular maintenance every three to six months.

Keep your system accessible for inspection and pumping, yet protected from unauthorized entrance. If access to your system is locked, make sure that you keep a key and that your service contractor also has a key.

Call a professional whenever you experience problems with your system, whenever the alarm is activated, or when there are any signs of system failure.

Keep detailed records about your aerobic system, including a map of where it is, general information such as model name, capacity, state license, date installed, contract service agreement, records of service visits and maintenance performed.



Conserve water to avoid overloading the system. Be sure to repair any leaking faucets or toilets.

Divert other sources of water, such as roof drains, house footing drains, and sump pumps away from the aerobic system.

Become familiar with how your system operates and the way it looks, sounds, and smells when it is working properly so that you can identify problems before they become serious. Immediately alert your service provider about anything unusual.

Ask your service provider how to know if your unit is malfunctioning. Check to see if your unit is working properly after a power outage.

### **DON'T:**

Don't allow anyone to drive or park a vehicle over any part of the system.

Don't make or allow repairs to your aerobic system without obtaining the required health department permits.

Don't attempt to clean or perform maintenance on any part of the aerobic system.

Don't use your toilet as a trash can or poison your treatment system and the groundwater by pouring harmful chemicals and cleaners down the drain. Harsh chemicals can kill the beneficial bacteria present in the system that treat your wastewater.



Don't use a garbage disposal without checking with your local regulatory agency to make sure that your aerobic system can accommodate this additional waste.



If you have other questions about septic systems, please contact the Macon County Health Department at (217) 423-6988

## Important Information



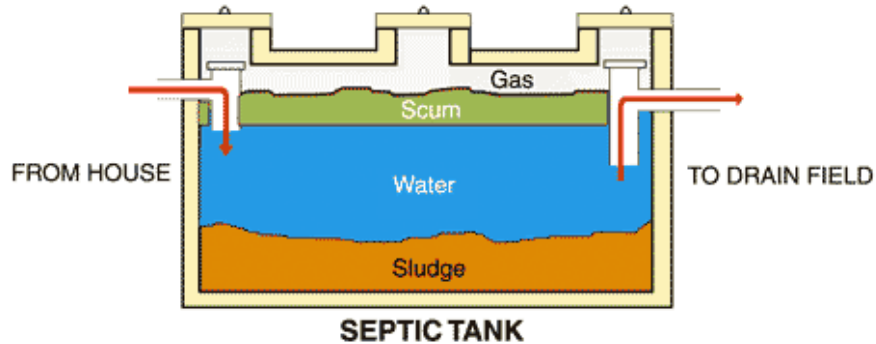
## Regarding the Care and Maintenance of Your Septic System

A Septic system is an onsite wastewater treatment system that processes and purifies household waste. It has two components: a septic tank and a leachfield or drainfield. Primary treatment occurs in the septic tank where bacteria digest organic materials in the wastewater. It then flows to the leachfield for secondary treatment. Here bacteria complete the digestion and purification process as the wastewater slowly leaches or infiltrates into the soil.

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## IMPORTANCE OF MAINTENANCE

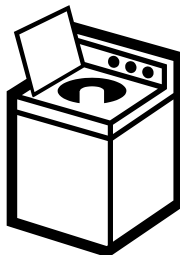
A septic tank system will serve a home satisfactorily only if the system is properly designed, installed and maintained. A neglected or abused system may result in liquid overflow to the ground surface or backup into the home. Overflows not only create offensive odors, but are also health hazards. Sewage may contain infectious organisms and are prime breeding places for some kinds of mosquitoes and other insects.



The septic tank is a watertight structure in which organic solids are decomposed by natural bacterial processes. Sewage flow is slowed within the tank to allow solids to settle to the bottom (sludge) and to allow grease and floatable solids to rise to the surface and accumulate (scum). Bacteria biologically convert some of the solids to liquid. Liquid from the middle layer of the tank passes out of the tank to a subsurface leach field for absorption into the soil. Build-up of solids (sludge and scum) within the tank will eventually result in an overflow of solid material into the soil absorption area. This overflow will cause clogging in the absorption field area and may result in system failure (ponding sewage and/or backed-up plumbing).

## THE DO's OF SEPTIC TANK MAINTENANCE

- 1) Use water sparingly. Do only full loads of wash at off-peak times and try to limit the number of loads per day.
- 2) Limit use of garbage disposals. Ground-up foods are hard on septic systems since they are not digested by the human body first.



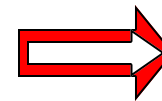
- 3) Remove solids from the septic tank by periodic pumping. Pumping frequency will depend on the size of the tank and the number of persons using the system. A 1,000 gallon system serving a four-person family will typically require cleaning every two to three years.
- 4) Fix all plumbing leaks as soon as possible. A leaking faucet or toilet can overload the septic system.
- 5) To facilitate cleaning and maintenance, the homeowner should have a diagram showing the locations of all septic system components with relation to the house. The diagram should be passed on to subsequent owners if the house is sold.

## THE DON'Ts OF SEPTIC TANK MAINTENANCE

- 1) Do not plant deep-rooted plants (trees, shrubs) within ten feet of the septic system.
- 2) Don't pour kitchen grease into drains.
- 3) Do not flush cigarette butts, tampons or other inorganic material down the toilet.
- 4) Don't drive over the septic system. Most septic tanks and sewer piping are not designed to support the weight of an automobile. In addition, compacting the soil over an absorption field will increase the likelihood of premature failure.
- 5) Don't build or pour concrete over your septic tank or laterals.
- 6) Don't ignore the warning signs of problems. Contact a licensed septic system repair company at the first sign of trouble (found in the yellow pages under "septic").



## WARNING SIGNS OF SEPTIC SYSTEM FAILURE



- Sluggish drains or plumbing backups in the home.
- Outdoor odors

## IF YOU HAVE AN AEROBIC SYSTEM:

**CHECK THE BACK OF THIS PAMPHLET FOR IMPORTANT DO's and DON'Ts**