

Protect Your Investment

Did you know that as a homeowner you are responsible for maintaining your septic system? If properly designed, constructed and maintained, your septic system can provide many years of effective wastewater treatment.

A failed septic system may produce backed up drains and foul odours and may reduce your property value. To protect your investment in your home, have your septic system periodically inspected and maintained. Regular maintenance will also protect the health of your family, community and environment.

Tips in this brochure are intended to assist you in making your septic system last longer and save your money.

An Authorized Person will Perform Maintenance or Repairs on your System

Under the Sewerage System Regulation only an Authorized Person may install or repair a septic system. An Authorized Person may be a Registered Onsite Wastewater Practitioner (ROWP) registered through the Applied Science Technologists & Technicians of BC (ASTTBC) or a Professional Engineer or Geoscientist registered through the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of BC (APEGBC).

See the last page of this brochure to find an Authorized Person in your area.

Important Contact Information:

For general information and records:

Island Health

(formerly Vancouver Island Health Authority)

Nanaimo Office:
3rd Floor, 6475 Metral Drive
Nanaimo, BC V9T 2L9
Phone: (250) 755-6215

Parksville Office:
489 Alberni Highway
Parksville, BC V9P 1J9
Phone: (250) 947-8222

To find an Authorized Person to work on your septic system

Applied Science Technologists & Technicians of BC — Onsite Wastewater Registration Program

10167-148th Street
Surrey, BC V3R 0S4
Phone: (604) 585-2788 ext. 238
owrp.asttbc.org/

Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of British Columbia (APEGBC)

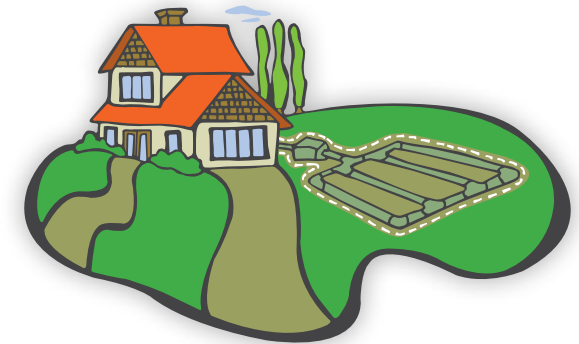
200 - 4010 Regent Street
Burnaby BC V5C 6N2
Phone: 1-888-430-8035
www.apeg.bc.ca/Member-Directories/Professionals-for-Sewerage-System-Regulation

For SepticSmart information and workshops:

Regional District of Nanaimo

Wastewater Services
6300 Hammond Bay Road
Nanaimo, BC V9T 6N2
Phone: (250) 390-6560 or (250) 954-3792
email: rcu@rdn.bc.ca

www.SepticSmart.ca



Septic System Care & Maintenance

A Guide for Residents

The M's and R's of Septic Care

A septic system typically consists of two components: the septic tank and the soil absorption area (drainfield). These components treat the wastewater so that it may safely return to the groundwater.

A septic system has two jobs to do: it must dispose of the wastewater, and it must treat it so it's suitable for return to the groundwater and soil. Once a system is in place, it is the homeowner's responsibility to perform critical steps in proper use and maintenance.

Proper functioning of your septic system relies on the "2 M's" and the "2 R's":

MONITOR your septic system to ensure that it is functioning properly. Get your solid levels checked in your septic tank annually.

MAINTAIN your septic tank by having it pumped out every 3 to 5 years or more often if required. The frequency of pumping depends on the size of your septic tank and the number of users in your household. Removing accumulated solids (settled sludge and floating scum) from your septic tank prevents particles from entering the drainfield and soil which is the major cause of a system failure.

REDUCE the amount of waste going into your system. Toxic cleaners and chemicals kill the beneficial bacteria in your septic tank requiring you to have your tank pumped more often. Harmful chemicals can be carried to your septic fields, into watercourses, and into drinking wells.

REFRAIN from putting non-biodegradable materials down your drains, and from using more water than you need. Using your toilet like a garbage can by flushing down facial tissue, dental floss, and other solids can clog your drainfield. Using excessive water can flush solids into the drainfield and saturate the soils which can affect drainage and bacterial action.

Top Four Things You Can Do to Protect Your Septic System

- 1 Regularly inspect your system and pump your tank as necessary.
- 2 Use water efficiently.
- 3 Don't dispose of any non-biodegradable material down the sinks or toilets.
- 4 Care for your drainfield.

Help!

WHERE IS MY SEPTIC SYSTEM

An as-built diagram may be on record at Island Health. Note, records of older systems may no longer be on file. Contact your local Island Health office for more information.



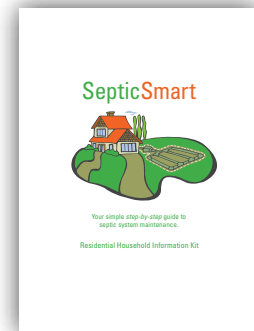
Stop, Look, and Smell

The most obvious signs of septic system malfunctions are easy to spot:

- Sewage surfacing over the drainfield.
- Lush, green growth or soggy areas over the drainfield.
- Slow or backed up drains, toilets or sinks.
- Sewage odours around the property.

If you notice a problem with your system, it is important to act immediately in order to protect human health and the environment. Contact an Authorized Person for advice on how to proceed.

An array of repairs can include pumping out the septic tank, repairing a broken tank baffle or cracked pipe, replacing the distribution box, replacing the septic tank, or replacing the drainfield. **Repairing problems immediately could save money in the long run as a small problem could turn into a bigger problem which can be more costly to repair.**



FOR MORE HELPFUL TIPS ON CARING FOR YOUR SEPTIC SYSTEM, VISIT SEPTICSMART.CA OR ORDER A FREE HOUSEHOLD SEPTICSMART EDUCATION KIT BY CONTACTING THE REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NANAIMO.