

# HOW TO CARE FOR YOUR SEPTIC SYSTEM

## 1. Inspect and Pump Your System Regularly

- The average household septic system should be inspected at least every three (3) years by a septic service professional.
- Due to their mechanized parts, alternative systems with electrical float switches, pumps, or mechanical components should be inspected more often, generally once a year.
- Household septic tanks are typically pumped every three (3) to five (5) years.



## 2. Use Water Efficiently – Efficient water use improves the operation of a septic system and reduces the risk of failure.

- Repair leaky fixtures.
- High-efficiency Toilets – Replacing existing toilets with high-efficiency models is an easy way to reduce the amount of wastewater entering your septic system.
- Faucet Aerators and High-efficiency Showerheads – Faucet aerators, high-efficiency showerheads, and shower flow restrictors help reduce water use and the volume of water entering your septic system.



- Washing Machines –
  - \* Select the proper load size or only run full loads of laundry.
  - \* Spread washing machine usage throughout the week. Washing multiple loads of laundry on the same day could harm your septic system by not allowing your septic tank enough time to treat waste and could possibly flood your drain field.
  - \* Select a new clothes washer that bears the *Energy Star* label to use 35% less energy and 50% less water than standard models.

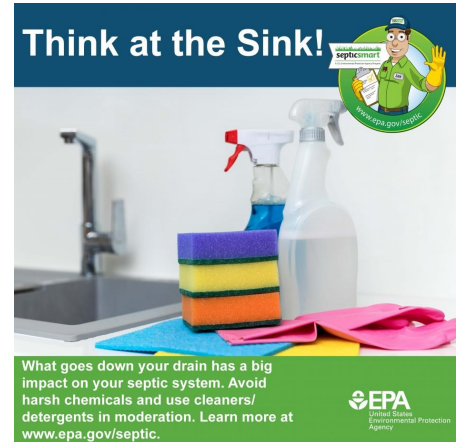
1 of 2

# HOW TO CARE FOR YOUR SEPTIC SYSTEM (CONT.)

## 3. Properly Dispose of Waste – What goes down the drain affects how well your septic system works.

- An easy rule of thumb: Do not flush anything besides human waste and toilet paper. Your septic system is not a trash can. Never flush household products such as: flushable wipes, diapers, dental floss, cigarette butts, coffee grounds, paper towels, pharmaceuticals, etc.
- Soaps and Detergents - Use soaps and detergents that are low-suds, biodegradable, and low- or phosphate-free.
- Your septic system contains a collection of living organisms that digest and treat household waste. Pouring toxins down your drain can kill these organisms and harm your septic system.

- \* Avoid chemical drain openers for a clogged drain. Instead, use boiling water or a drain snake.
- \* Never pour cooking oil or grease down the drain and wipe grease covered pans with a paper towel before washing.
- \* Never pour oil-based paints, solvents, or large volumes of toxic cleaners down the drain. Latex paint waste should be minimized.
- \* Eliminate or limit the use of a garbage disposal. This will significantly reduce the amounts of fats, grease, and solids that enter your septic tank and ultimately clogs its drain field.



## 4. Maintain your Drain Field – Your drain field is an important part of your septic system.

- The drain field is a component of your septic system that removes contaminants from the liquid that emerges from your septic tank. To maintain your drain field:



- \* Never park or drive on your drain field.
- \* Plant trees the appropriate distance from your drain field to keep roots from growing into your septic system. A septic service professional can advise you of the proper distance, depending on your septic tank and landscape.
- \* Keep roof drains, sump pumps, and other rainwater drainage systems away from your drainfield area. Excess water slows down or

2 of 2