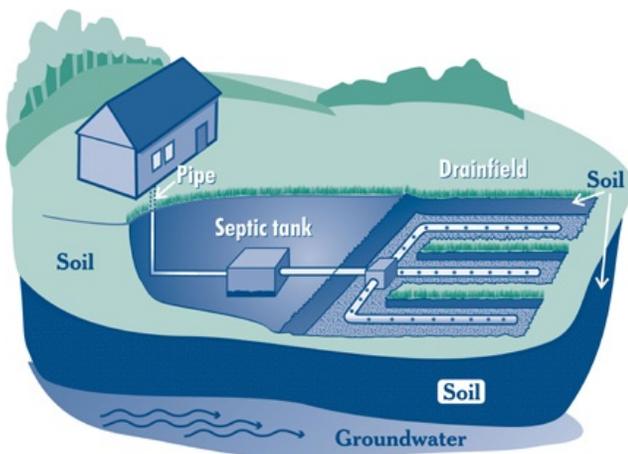


SEPTIC SYSTEM MAINTENANCE SUGGESTIONS

- **DON'T** put heavy paper, cloths, paper towels, cigarette filters, rags, disposable diapers or other large waste pieces into a septic system.
- **DON'T** dispose of facial tissue in the toilet. It is best to use easily decomposed one ply toilet tissue.
- **DON'T** pour grease or solvents into a septic system. Collect excess grease in a container to be disposed with garbage.
- **DON'T** plant trees over your sewage disposal area.
- **DON'T** drive heavy equipment over a septic system.
- **DON'T** ignore any leaking faucets or leaking toilet tank valves.
- **DON'T** use excessive amounts of water. Spread out when you do loads of wash. Avoid taking a series of long showers. Fix leaking faucets and toilets.
- **DO** be sure rain spouts do not drain over your disposal field.
- Garbage grinder disposal units are **NOT** permitted except by special permission from the Board of Health (these units require a 50% larger tank and a 25% greater field).
- **DO** exercise good judgment in limiting amount of waste water generated from washing machines, etc. during periods of prolonged or very heavy precipitation.
- Normal use of detergent, soap, bleach, etc. is **NOT** harmful to septic system ... but many use too much.
- Water softener units have **NO** adverse effect on the action of the septic tank, but may cause a slight shortening of the life of the disposal field.



- **DO** keep a diagram of your septic system for reference.
- **DO** obtain the proper permit if your septic system malfunctions and requires pumping or other repairs. Obtain a permit from your local health department prior to beginning any septic system job.

FAILURE TO PUMP OUT THE SEPTIC TANK

... is the most frequently documented cause of septic system failure.

The West Windsor Health Department recommends that all homeowners pump their septic tank every three years. Waste build-up can lead to blockage of the drainage fields.

Keep a permanent record of all inspections, pumping, alterations, or repairs to the septic system. Include the name of the engineer or contractor who performed the work in case it is necessary to contact that person in the future.

Failure to pump out a septic tank when it has reached its capacity to retain scum and sludge will result in the scum and sludge solids being carried out of the septic tank and into the disposal field ... which can clog and ruin the disposal field. A complete reconstruction of the disposal field is usually the only solution when this happens!

Avoid biological septic tank additives: there are no known chemicals, yeasts or other substances capable of eliminating or reducing the solids content of the septic tank so that pumping is not necessary.

SIGNS OF SEPTIC SYSTEM FAILURE

- The toilets back up into the house or are very slow to drain.
- Sewage or effluent is seeping into the building or its basement. If the seepage has a distinctive odor, it is sewage rather than ground water.
- Effluent is being discharged to the surface of the ground. There may be a noticeable odor of sewage, or the presence of unusually lush green vegetative growth during periods of low rainfall over the absorption field.
- Well water has developed an unpleasant taste, the water has a foul odor or the analysis of the well water indicates contamination.

The construction or operation of a septic system is governed by "The Standards for Individual Subsurface Sewage Disposal Systems", N.J.A.C. 7:9A-1, also known as Chapter 199. It is illegal in New Jersey to construct, alter or repair a septic system without a permit. Penalties for violating the regulations may be up to \$50,000 per day per violation.

If you are unsure as to whether or not specific activities require a permit, contact the West Windsor Health Department at (609) 936-8400.

WEST WINDSOR HEALTH DEPARTMENT

servicing the communities of West Windsor ■ Hightstown ■ Robbinsville