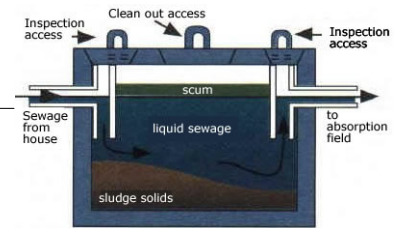


The Home Owners Guide to Septic Tanks



Septic Tank Information, Care and Maintenance

The most common domestic wastewater treatment system used in rural areas is the septic tank-soil absorption system. The septic tank removes settleable and floatable solids from the wastewater. The soil absorption field then filters and treats the clarified septic tank effluent and distributes it through the soil. Removing the solids from the wastewater protects the soil absorption system from clogging and failure. In addition to removing solids, the septic tank also promotes biological digestion of a portion of the solids and stores the remaining undigested portion.

The first stage of the treatment system, the septic tank, removes

solids by holding wastewater in the tank. This allows the heavier solids to settle as sludge and the lighter particles to form a scum at the top. Up to 50% of the solids in the tank decompose; the remainder accumulate in the tank. Biological and chemical additives are not needed to aid or accelerate decomposition. As the system is used, sludge continues to accumulate in the bottom of the tank. Properly designed tanks have enough space for 3 to 5 years of accumulation of sludge. When the sludge level increases beyond this point, sewage has less time to settle before leaving the tank and more solids escape into the absorption area. If too much sludge

accumulates, no settling occurs before the sewage flows to the absorption field. Infiltration of sludge into the soil absorption field will cause system failure. To prevent this, the tank must be pumped periodically. The contents is known as septage. Frequency of pumping depends on the size of the septic tank, how much wastewater you put into it related to number of persons in the home and the amount of solids introduced to the tank.

Cleaning of your septic tank must be performed by licensed haul contractors.

The use of additives in the tank to reduce sludge volume are not a substitute for regular

pumping. In fact, these products may be illegal and are not recommended.

The proper care of your septic system depends largely on what you put into it. Here is some items you should not flush into your septic system; grease, fats, oils, cat litters, disposable diapers, sanitary products and applicators, plastics of any kind, razors and hypodermic needles. When your septic tank is pumped, the contents are disposed at a wastewater treatment plant for further treatment. The above items will be harmful to your own septic tank system but will also be harmful to the wastewater treatment plant equipment and staff.

Septic Tank Pumping Guide

Estimated Septic Tank Pumping Frequencies in Years											
Tank Size (gallons)	500	5.8	2.6	1.5	1.0	0.7	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.1	-
	750	9.1	4.2	2.6	1.8	1.3	1.0	0.7	0.6	0.4	0.3
	900	11.0	5.2	3.3	2.3	1.7	1.3	1.0	0.8	0.7	0.5
	1000	12.4	5.9	3.7	2.6	2.0	1.5	1.2	1.0	0.8	0.7
	1250	15.6	7.5	4.8	3.4	2.6	2.0	1.7	1.4	1.2	1.0
	1500	18.9	9.1	5.9	4.2	3.3	2.6	2.1	1.8	1.5	1.3
	1750	22.1	10.7	6.9	5.0	3.9	3.1	2.6	2.2	1.9	1.6
	2000	25.4	12.4	8.0	5.9	4.5	3.7	3.1	2.6	2.2	2.0
	2250	28.6	14.0	9.1	6.7	5.2	4.2	3.5	3.0	2.6	2.3
	2500	33.9	15.6	10.2	7.5	5.9	4.8	4.0	3.5	3.0	2.6
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Household Size (# of people)											