



Top Tips for Septic System Maintenance

Follow these septic system care do's and don'ts to benefit the life of your system, your health, your finances and the environment.
Information provided by Bio-Microbics Fotolia/Laurine45 01/24/2013

Without proper septic system care — especially as a system nears 20 or more years of use — homeowners are in danger of leaks and blockages that can contaminate soil and water sources.

Bio-Microbics incorporates designs, manufactures and supplies wastewater and storm water equipment for residential single-family homes, small communities, commercial properties and marine vessel markets.



If a septic system is not suitably located, properly designed, carefully installed, and adequately maintained, it can fail. It can also fail if solids clog it. Failing systems can threaten your family and neighbors' health, reduce the value of your property, and cost a lot of money to repair. They can also contaminate groundwater, lakes, or streams with bacteria, nitrates, viruses, chemicals and chlorides. These routine actions and common issues to keep an eye out for listed below will help you keep your septic system flowing smoothly and safely.

Septic System Care

Record Keeping Keep copies of all system drawings/plans of the site, installed equipment, and service records with all other home appliance documents. Record all applicable information.

Laundry/Water Usage Spread wash loads throughout the week. Instead of liquid fabric softener, dryer sheets should be used. Use low-suds, biodegradable and low phosphate detergents, such as Mighty Mike® from Scienco/FAST (www.sciencofast.com).

Leaky Fixtures Large quantities of water are added to your wastewater system when you have leaking fixtures. Timely detection and repair can help to maximize the life of your system, especially the drain field.

Fats, Oils, and Grease Be aware of too much grease (i.e. animal fats, vegetable oils, lard, etc) down the drain may overload or prevent the bacteria from fully breaking down the waste.

Water Softeners The FAST® process may tolerate discharge from properly operating softeners that backwash as needed based on water usage (DIR) vs. timer operated systems, if allowed by your local regulatory authority. However, these discharges can possibly damage other parts of the septic system.

Food Wastes Garbage disposal waste is acceptable – if allowed by your local regulatory authority. However, it may lead to more frequent removal of solids from your septic tank. For large quantities of food, please dispose of in the garbage.

Disinfectants/Cleaners Use citric acid, chlorine, and/or other biodegradable cleaners according to the manufacturer's recommendations. Products containing quaternary ammonia or pine-oil based cleaners should not be used. Use drain cleaners as a last resort to unclog pipes.

Septic System Yard Safety

Floor Drains from Garage and Workrooms Should be diverted away from your septic system. Items like petroleum-based oils, gas, and saw dust should never enter the system.

Medicines Do not flush them down any drain. All antibiotic medicines are harmful to treatment quality. Unused medications should be returned to the pharmacy, doctor, or thrown away in the trash.

Septic Tank Additives/Enzymes The wastewater in the system contains all the required bacteria for proper operation. Additives are unnecessary; and may do more harm than good.

Paper Products Use single- or double-ply, non-quilted, white toilet paper products. Some color dyes in the paper cannot be eaten by natural bacteria. Non-bleached paper (brown in color) takes longer to break down and can therefore increase your biosolids pump out frequency. Avoid flushing paper towels, napkins, wipes, or other thicker paper material.

Biosolids (sludge) Removal To determine when pump out is required, a maintenance provider should measure the biosolids level(s) in the tank(s) on a regular basis. Please see the service manual for specific procedures.

Blower Operation Do not turn off blower. Notify your maintenance provider if you detect problems with the blower or if you are leaving the property for an extended period (more than 3 weeks).

Alarm If alarm sounds, press the "Reset" button on the front of the panel. Contact your service provider (info should be on the control panel and/or the blower) or contact Bio-Microbics (913-422-0707) as soon as possible.

Down Spouts Anywhere water is collected, i.e. roof downspouts, pavement runoff, or sump pump/house footing drains, the water should be diverted away from the septic tank or drainfield.

Traffic/Landscaping Do not drive over any portion of your system (tank, piping, drain field) except for normal yard traffic, i.e. lawn mowers, etc. Tanks (H-20) can be made for under roadways, driveways. If possible, deter traffic by using a fence or create a landscaped area with shallow root plants (ornaments, bushes, decorative grasses, and/or flowers). Don't plant trees near any portion of your system (within 30').

Structures Do not build patios, carports, or other structures over any part of your septic system; as this may cause damage.

Vents/Odors/Intakes Keep vent and blower housing clear of debris, such as leaves and snow. Contact your service provider if you detect septic odors, as this may indicate a problem with the system.

Don't Pour These Items Down the Drain

Food Wastes Animal bones, egg shells, coffee grounds, corn cobs, melon rinds/fruit peels, skin, home brewery waste

Personal Care Products Bandages, condoms, disposable diapers, sanitary napkins/wet wipes

Chemicals/Toxins Automotive fluids, caustic cleaners, harsh detergents, floors stripper, herbicides/pesticides, medications/drugs, paints(oil-based), quaternary ammonia, solvents/thinners

Other Products Cat litter, cigarette butts, cloth towels/rags, film developing waste, metal/plastic objects, modeling clay, paper towels/scraps, plastic bags, rv waste, string/yarn/nylon, sticks/yard waste



Read more: <http://www.motherearthnews.com/green-homes/tips-for-septic-system-maintenance-zw0z1301zmcc.aspx?page=3#ixzz2MImcGpSC>

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