

Caring for Your Septic System

Septic systems are individual wastewater treatment systems that use the soil to treat small wastewater flows, usually from individual homes.

Your septic system treats your household wastewater by temporarily holding it in the septic tank where heavy solids and lighter scum are allowed to separate from the wastewater. The solids stored in the tank are decomposed by bacteria and later removed, along with the lighter scum, by a septic tank pumper.

The treated water leaves the tank and flows into a distribution box, which disperses the flow throughout the drain field. The water seeps through the soil where it is treated further. A properly functioning system doesn't pollute.

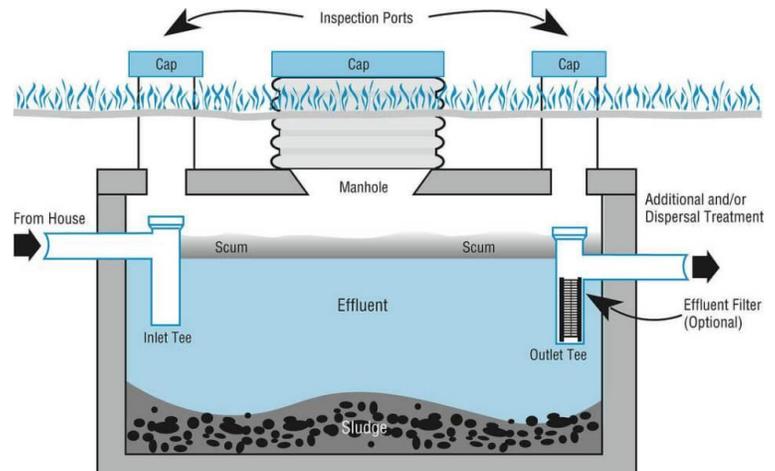
Failing System Consequences

Failing septic systems can cause public health and environmental issues

- Degradation of groundwater and surface waters
- Loss of property value
- Health threat to your family and neighbors
- Expensive to repair

Warning Signs

- Sewage surfacing over the drainfield
- Sewage back-ups into the home
- Slow draining toilets or drains
- Sewage odors
- Lush green vegetation over the drainfield



Maintenance

Regular pumping prevents solids from escaping into the drainfield and clogging the pores in the soil. According to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection systems without a garbage disposal should be pumped out every three years. Systems with a garbage disposal should be pumped every year. Waiting for problems to show is a serious and often costly mistake. Septic tanks that aren't maintained have higher than normal sludge levels, which allow more solids to escape into the drainfield causing a clog and back-ups.

