Septic Care

**Do**

- Know where your septic is & protect it!
- Inspect system (+ tank levels) annually.
- Pump tank regularly (every 3–5 years, or when solids fill 1/3 of tank).
- Use water wisely.
- Go easy on the garbage disposal (use compost or trench).
- Keep vehicles off tank & drainfield areas.
- Plant grass—or other very shallow-rooted plants—over drainfield as shown on this page!
- Keep deep-rooting, water-loving plants—especially trees & shrubs—away from all components (they can invade pipes & damage system).
- Reduce water use! USE COMMON SENSE!
  - Use low-flow fixtures, showers, toilets
  - Run & drain appliances one at a time (dishwasher, washing machines, etc. spread laundry over entire week & avoid partial loads)
  - Showers use less water than baths
  - Limit shower length & turn water off when lathering
  - Fix all leaks & get water loss promptly
  - Turn water off while brushing, shaving, or rinsing.
- Drain water from hot tub onto ground, away from drainfield, and not into storm drain or surface waters.
- Use phosphate-free detergent & only manufacturer's recommended amount.
- Direct runoff from roofs, streets, driveways, & adjoining properties away from drainfield.
- Direct subsurface water movement with curtain drains (placed 20 ft. to pick up runoff effectively).
- Keep any irrigation (sprinkler) system at least 10 feet from edge of septic system.
- Water lines should never cross upon septic lines.
- And did we say, CONSERVE WATER?
- Locate your septic system, map location of all septic parts.
  - Keep accurate, detailed records (inspections, pumping, repair, servicing, professional, etc.).
  - Keep septic tank lid easily accessible (install ring).
  - Pass along all septic records & information to new owner or tenant of property.
  - Save box change to cover future septic service.
  - Display this list to those in your family, guests, or patrons who use your septic system.

**Do Not**

- Use garbage disposal (collars & grease into system may lead to drainfield failure).
- Drive Park vehicles or heavy equipment (including boating) over drainfield or reserve drainfield (nothing bigger than a riding lawn mower).
- Use tank additives or “miracle” system cleansers.
- Flush non-biodegradable solid wastes: diapers, cigarette butts, coffee grounds, tampons, sanitary napkins, condoms, greens, oils, paper products other than tp, plastics, bones, kitty litter, etc.
- Pour strong chemicals, like cleaning products, down drain (household hazardous waste can destroy septic system & contaminate groundwater & surface water).
- Drain cleaners, solvents, paint & paint thinners.
- Floor & sink cleaners containing amounts of bleach.
- Motor oil, antifreeze, pesticides, or plant chemicals.
- Discard medications (like antibiotics) or anti-bacterial products down drains (will kill critters).
- Plant trees, shrubs, or vegetable garden over drainfield (septics, willow, willow, root of vegetable really bad).
- Work the soil (some septic parts just 6” under).
- Run storm drainage into septic system.
- Drain water from hot tub to septic system.
- Drain (or allow backwash from) water softeners or conditioners into system.
- Compact soils of drainfield or reserve areas in any way, big or small: building patios, nurseries, docks, additions, sports courts; or storage sheds over long part of septic system (also prevents seepage). Over compacting will cause drainage problems & clogs drains;
- Grazing livestock.
- Cover drainfield or reserve area in any way (petrolene, mulch, etc.)
- Overly compacting, planting or covering) big or small: building patios, nurseries, docks, additions, sports courts, or storage sheds over long part of septic system (also prevents seepage). Over compacting will cause drainage problems & clogs drainfields; grazing livestock.
- Cover drainfield or reserve area in any way (petrolene, mulch, etc.).
- Allow driveways or access over septic system.
- Grade, level, fill, or cut drainfield or reserve.
- Install sprinkler system in drainfield.
- Plant water-loving plants over drainfield (watering will saturate soils and fill system's design to treat, aerate, & dispense wastewater).