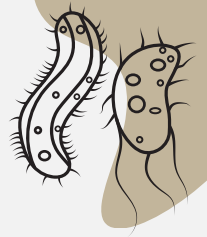




Septic System Basics



How does a septic system work?

A septic system's purpose is to separate and treat waste water from the home so that it can be introduced back into the environment and filtered naturally by the soil.

Wastewater from the home travels to an underground septic tank. Any items that have been flushed, drained, or laundered will travel with wastewater into the tank. Solids settle to the bottom of the tank, while fats and oils float to the top. A layer of partially treated water remains between them, called 'effluent'. Inside the tank, bacteria work to decompose human waste and food particles. Even so, the effluent still contains harmful pathogens and must be treated further. Effluent exits the tank and makes its way through long, underground trenches, called 'leaching fields'. Fields allow effluent to drain very slowly into surrounding soil, where bacteria and viruses are filtered out of the liquid. The end result is treated water that re-enters the groundwater supply.



Causes for concern

Signs of a failing system

- Slow draining bathtubs, showers, and sinks
- Water and/or sewage from toilets, sinks, and drains backing up
- Damp spots or standing water near or over fields
- Soft, wet, or spongy soil surrounding fields
- High levels of nitrates or coliform bacteria in well water analysis
- Strong sewage odor around tank and fields

Septic systems can last 20-30 years if properly maintained!



Maintain your system with care

• Pump and inspect frequently

Systems should be inspected every 1-3 years, and pumped every 3-5 years, depending on water usage and size.

• Conserve water

Reduce the risk of malfunction through use of high efficiency toilets and showerheads, or faucet aerators. Run only full loads of laundry.

• Limit use of garbage disposal

• Properly dispose of waste

The following items should NEVER be flushed: Cooking oil, grease, wipes, feminine hygiene products, diapers, cat litter, & household chemicals. Flush ONLY human waste and toilet paper.

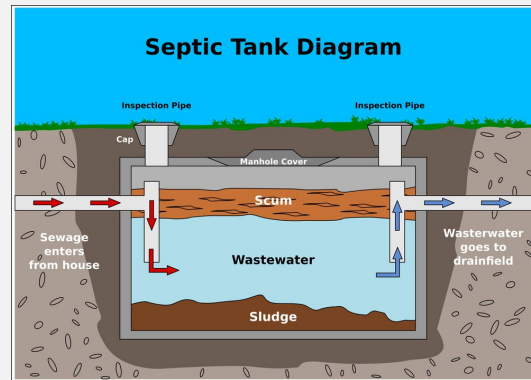
• Don't overwhelm your fields

Direct water from land and roof drains away from fields. The less excess water reaches them, the better!

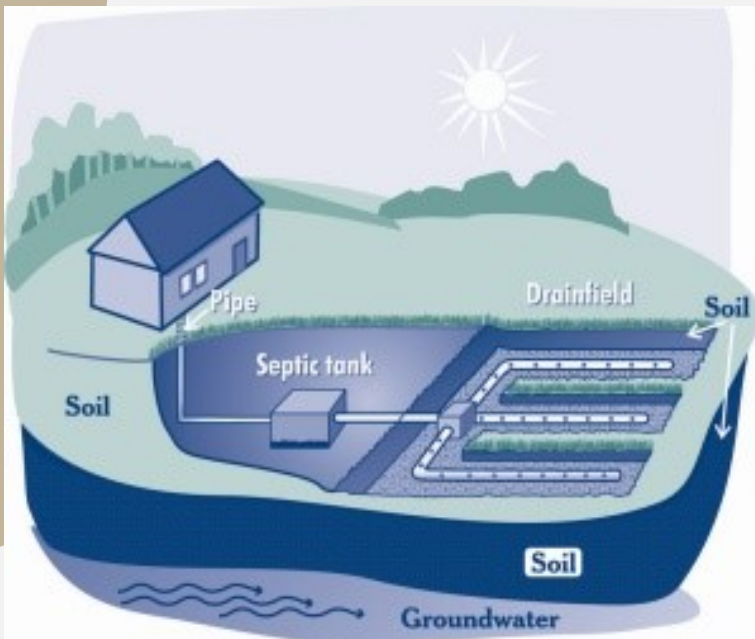
• NEVER park or drive over your fields

• Be wary of additives

Additives are typically not needed in order for your septic system to function properly.



Modern septic tanks have two compartments, but the idea is the same - the effluent is seen here labeled as 'wastewater'



Leaching fields come in all different materials and sizes depending on the needs of the household - here's an example



Whatever you flush will make its way back into the very same groundwater supply your community relies on! Protect your water!

If you have any question contact NVHD at 203-881-3255