

## Remember the 3 P's

### *Pump*

- Pump your tank at least every 3 to 5 years to help ensure it continues to work properly.
- Waste and kitchen garbage disposal material can build up over time, so pumping your system is an important step.
- Have your septic system inspected every 3 years by a licensed sewage disposal company to check for any problems.
- Having your system inspected and pumped on a regular basis is a bargain when you consider the cost of replacing the entire system.

### *Protect*

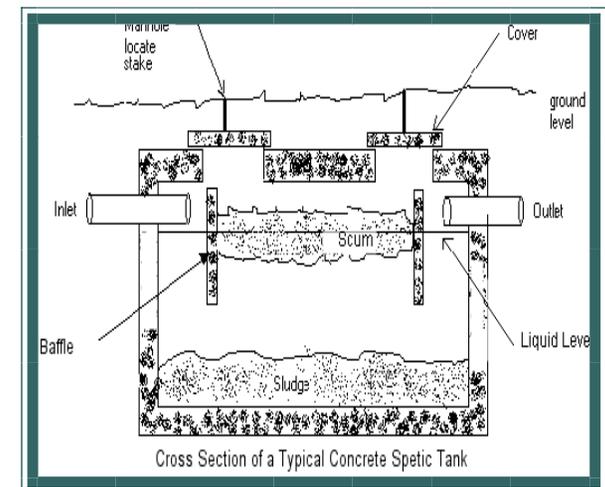
- Do not drive over or park vehicles on your septic tank or drainfield.
- Plant only grass over and near your drainfield to avoid damage from roots.
- Make sure your gutter downspouts are directed away from the drainfield area.
- Fix leaky toilets and dripping faucets as soon as possible.

### *Prevent*

- Use your toilet to flush human waste only. Anything other than human waste can clog and possibly damage your septic system.
- Do not pour household products, such as cleansers, medicine, auto fluids, paint and lawn care products down the drain. These items can pollute surface and found water, which supplies your drinking water. It may also end up in your local rivers, lakes and coastal waters.
- Compost your kitchen scraps rather than use your garbage disposal, to help your septic system last longer.



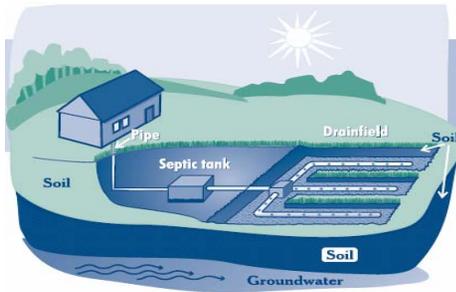
## *How to Care for Your Septic System*



**FOR MORE INFORMATION  
CONTACT YOUR LOCAL  
WATER UTILITY!**

*Protecting Our Drinking  
Water for Future*

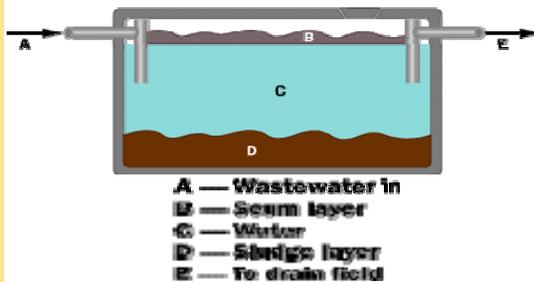
## Did You Know...



Typical septic system

Did you know as a homeowner it is your responsibility to maintain your septic system? Did you know maintaining your septic system is protecting your investment? Did you know that you should have your septic system periodically inspected and pumped out by a professional?

## How does a Septic Tank System Work?



There are four main components that make up a septic system. These include the pipe that runs from the home, the septic tank, a drainfield, and the soil. All household wastes exit the home through a pipe that is connected to the septic tank. The septic tank is a watertight container. It holds waste-

water long enough to allow solids to settle out (forming sludge) and oil and grease to float to the surface (as scum). It also allows partial decomposition of the solid materials. When partially treated wastewater exits the septic tank it is discharged to the drainfield. A drainfield is made of perforated pipes buried in trenches filled with gravel. The partially treated wastewater is slowly absorbed and filtered by the soil in the drainfield (final treatment stage). As wastewater reaches this final stage of treatment harmful bacteria, viruses, and nutrients are removed.



Septic System Overload

## Operation & Maintenance

After the septic tank system is placed in service, proper operation and maintenance of the system will ensure continued efficient service and prevent sudden replacement expenses. The septic tank and drain field are designed and installed to handle a maximum calculated daily sewage flow. Consistently exceeding the design flow will eventually overload the system and cause failure. The tank may receive new solids faster than it can treat them and the drain field may become saturated from excessive water use. **Various products are on the market which are said to start, accelerate or improve the action in the septic tank. Since all necessary bacteria are already present in the sewage system entering the system, such products are not recommended.**

Maintenance of a septic tank will depend largely on the daily sewage flow and individual household wastewater characteristics. With ordinary use and care, a septic tank should not require pumping out more than once every three to five years. It should, however, be inspected to determine the depth of accumulated sludge and grease.

Waste from kitchen garbage disposal units puts an extra load on a septic tank system. If a disposal is used, the capacity of the tank should be increased to handle the increased solid wastes. The tank may also require more frequent pumping to remove accumulated solid waste buildup.

Failure to pump out a septic tank system when indicated will result in solids or greases overflowing into the drain field, which in turn may become clogged and stop functioning. In this event, not only will the tank have to be pumped out, but the drain field may also have to be replaced.

Septic tanks can be cleaned by septic tank cleaning firms permitted by the county health department. This type of work should only be done by experienced professionals who will pump the entire contents of the tank into a tank truck and dispose of the contents in an approved, sanitary manner.

Septic tanks installed after January 1, 1998 are required to have outlet filters. For information on how to service/clean the filter, call your septic tank contractor or your County Health Department.

