

Caring for your Septic System

Septic systems must be maintained regularly to stay working. Neglect or abuse of your system can cause it to fail. Failing systems can cause a serious health threat to your family and neighbors, degrade the environment, reduce the value of your property, can be expensive to repair, and can put water supply users at risk.

Watch out for warning signs of a failing system!

Look for sewage surfacing on the drain field, sewage back-ups in the house, lush, green growth over the drain field, slow draining toilets or drains, sewage odors.



Image from SepticTankCare.net

Beware of Stormwater Pollution

Stormwater recharges our water aquifers with fresh, clean water for our drinking supply, our agricultural needs, our beautiful environmental needs, and our aquatic recreational fun. Run-off from our land surfaces, especially our paved, impervious surfaces, and our lawns can wash pollutants into our streams, rivers, and ocean. Infiltration of the pollutants can contaminate our groundwater with pathogens making our water supply not drinkable, our shellfish areas uneatable, and our aquatic environment destroyed.



Belmont DPW Contact Info:

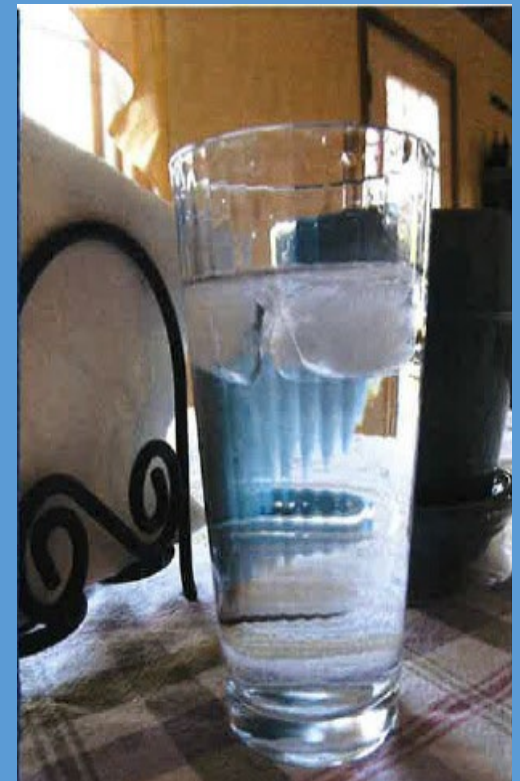
Phone: (617) 993-2680

Email: BelmontDPW@belmont-ma.gov



Clean Water

It's refreshing!





What to do

Do

- ✓ Have your tank pumped and inspected every 2-3 years.
- ✓ Practice water conservation by repairing water leaks, conserving wash loads to full loads. Use water-saving features in faucets, shower-heads, and toilets.
- ✓ Know the location of your septic system and drain field.
- ✓ Divert roof drains, sump pump drains, and run-off water from driveways and hillsides, away from septic system.
- ✓ Use bleach, disinfectants, drain and toilet bowl cleaners sparingly. Dispose leftover hazard household chemicals to your approved hazardous waste collection center.

Don't

- ✗ Park, drive over septic system.
- ✗ Allow roots from nearby trees or shrubs to clog and damage your drain lines.
- ✗ Make or allow repairs to septic system without obtaining a health department permit.
- ✗ Use commercial septic tank additives.
- ✗ Flush non-degradables like grease, disposable diapers, plastics, disposable wipes, or flush poisons like antifreeze, gasoline, paint, paint thinner, pesticides.



How Our Septic Systems Work

A conventional septic system consists of a septic tank, a distribution box, and a drain field, all connected by pipes, called conveyance lines.

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. This separation process is known as primary treatment. The solids stored in the tank are decomposed by bacteria and later removed, along with the lighter scum, by a professional septic tank pumper.

After partially treated wastewater leaves the tank, it flows into a distribution box, which separates this flow evenly into a network of drain field trenches. Drainage holes at the bottom of each line allow the wastewater to drain into gravel trenches for temporary storage. This effluent then slowly seeps into the subsurface soil where it is further treated and purified (secondary treatment). A properly functioning septic system does not pollute the groundwater.

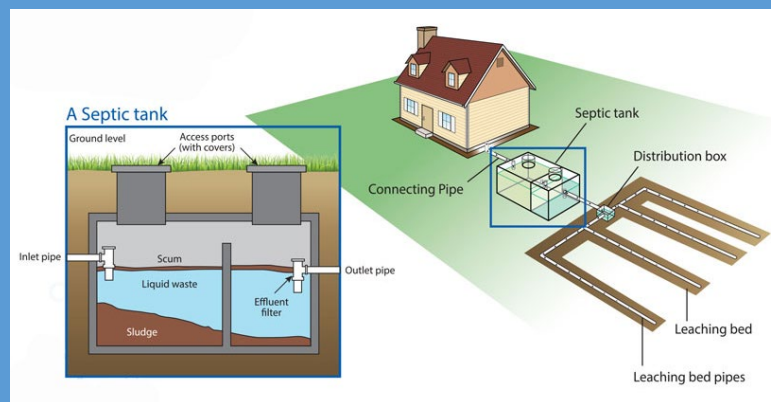


Image from U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Adapted from a brochure by Newbury, MA, and
<http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/water/wastewater/caring-for-septicssystem-reference-guide-for-homeowner.html>