

Do's HOMEOWNERS Don'ts

Preventive Maintenance for Homes with Onsite Wastewater Collection and Treatment Systems

DO'S AND DON'TS FOR INSIDE THE HOUSE

Do keep a record of pumping inspections and other maintenance.

Do check the labels of the home-care products you normally use. Many products used in most homes every day will destroy bacteria. Bacteria must be present to digest and liquify the scum. If not digested, the scum will accumulate until it overflows, clogging the soil absorption area. Labels carrying any of the following warnings will kill bacteria.

- Harmful or fatal if swallowed
- Avoid contact with the skin
- Do not get in open cuts or sores
- If comes in contact with eyes call a physician immediately



Do use substitutes for household hazardous waste. Replace the following hazardous products with products that are less environmentally harmful. The hazardous cleaners are listed below, followed by the suggested substitute.

Ammonia-based cleaners: Sprinkle baking soda on a damp sponge. For windows, use a solution of 2 tbs. white vinegar to 1 qt. water. Place the mixture into a spray bottle.

Disinfectants: Use borax: 1/2 cup in a gallon of water; deodorizes also.

Drain decloggers: Use a plunger or metal snake, or remove and clean trap.

Scouring cleaners & powders: Sprinkle baking soda on a damp sponge or add 4 tbs. baking soda to 1 qt. warm water. Or use Bon Ami; it's cheaper and won't scratch.

Carpet/upholstery cleaners: Sprinkle dry cornstarch or baking soda on, then vacuum. For tougher stains, blot with white vinegar in soapy water.

Toilet cleaners: Sprinkle on baking soda or Bon Ami, then scrub with a toilet brush.



Laundry detergents: Choose one with a zero phosphate content or use soap flakes with 1/3 cup of washing soda. (Before switching, wash clothes in pure washing soda to remove residues.)

Furniture/floor polishes: To clean, use oil soap and warm water. Dry with soft cloth. Polish with 1 part lemon juice and 2 parts oil (any kind), or use natural products with lemon oil or beeswax in mineral oil.

Metal cleaners: Brass and copper: scrub with a used half of lemon dipped in salt. Stainless steel: use scouring pad and soapy water. Silver: rub gently with toothpaste and soft wet cloth.

Oven cleaners: Quickly sprinkle salt on drips, then scrub. Use baking soda and scouring pads on older spills.



Don't use special additives that are touted to enhance the performance of your tank or system. Additives can cause major damage to your drainfield and other areas in the collection system. The natural microorganisms that grow in your system generate their own enzymes that are sufficient for breaking down and digesting nutrients in the wastewater. TCW will provide natural microbials if the system is depleted of active organisms.



Don't flush dangerous and damaging substances into your wastewater treatment system. Specifically, do not flush . . .

- Excessive amounts of bath or body oils
- Water softener backwash
- Flammable or toxic products
- Household cleaners, especially floor wax and rug cleaners
- Chlorine bleach, chlorides, and pool or spa products
- Pesticides, herbicides, or agricultural chemicals or fertilizers
- Paints, varnishes, thinners, waste oils, photographic chemicals



Do use your trash can to dispose of non-degradable substances that cause maintenance problems and/or increase the need for septage pumping. Dispose of the following with your trash:

- Egg shells, kitty litter, coffee grounds, tea bags, bones, cigarette butts, chewing tobacco
- Paper towels, newspapers, sanitary napkins, diapers, gum, candy wrappers, facial tissue, tampons, condoms
- Cooking grease
- Rags, large amounts of hair, plastics

Do collect grease in a container and dispose with your trash. Avoid using garbage disposals excessively. Compost scraps or dispose with your trash. Food by-products accelerate the need for septage pumping and increase maintenance.



Don't leave interior faucets on to protect water lines during cold spells. A running faucet can easily increase your wastewater flow by 1,000 to 3,000 gallons per day and hydraulically overload your system. Instead, properly insulate or heat your faucets and plumbing.

Don't use excessive amounts of water. (50 gallons per person per day is typical. If your household does not practice any of the "water conserving tips," you may be using too much water.)

Do conserve water:

- Take shorter showers or baths with a partially filled tub.
- Don't let water run unnecessarily while washing hands, food, teeth, dishes, etc.
- Wash dishes and clothes when you have a full load.
- When possible, avoid doing several loads in one day.
- Use water saving devices on faucets and showerheads.
- When replacing old toilets, buy low-flush models.

Do keep lint out of your wastewater treatment system by cleaning the lint filters on your washing machine and dryer before every load. Installing a supplemental lint filter on your washing machine would be a good precautionary measure. (This normally takes just a few minutes. Lint and other such materials can make an extreme difference in the frequency and cost of pumping out your primary treatment tank.) Contact TCW for pricing and installation of a lint filter for your washing machine.



Don't ignore leaky plumbing fixtures; repair them. A leaky toilet can waste up to 2,000 gallons of water in a single day. That's 10-20 times more water than a household's typical daily usage. Leaky plumbing fixtures increase your water bill, waste natural resources, and overload your system. A leaky toilet may not always be heard. Contact TCW for die test strips for proper checking.

DO'S AND DON'TS FOR OUTSIDE THE HOUSE

Do learn the location of your septic system and drainfield.



Don't dig without knowing the location of your wastewater treatment system. As much as possible, plan landscaping and permanent outdoor structures before installation. But easily removable items, such as bird baths and picnic tables, are OK to place on top of your system. Contact TCW with any questions about locating structures in the drainfield area.

Do divert roof drains and surface water from driveways and hillsides away from the septic system.



Don't drive over your tank or any buried components in your system, unless it's been equipped with a special traffic lid. If the system is subject to possible traffic, put up a barricade or a row of shrubs. The area over the drainfield should be left undisturbed with only a mowed grass cover.



Don't dump RV waste into your wastewater treatment system and tanks. It will increase the frequency of required septage pumping. When dumped directly into the pumping vault, RV waste clogs or fouls equipment, causing undue maintenance and repair costs. (Some RV waste may contain chemicals that are toxic or that may retard the biological digestion occurring within the tank.)

Don't ever connect rain gutters or storm drains to the sewer or allow surface water to drain into it. The additional water will increase costs, reduce the capacity of the collection and treatment systems, and flood the drainfield.



Don't enter your tank. Any work to the tank should be done from the outside. Gases that can be generated in the tank and/or oxygen depletion can be fatal.

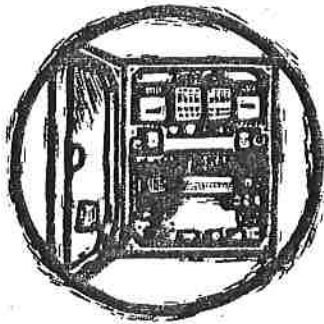
HOMEOWNERS

Do's and Don'ts

IF YOU HAVE A CONTROL PANEL

Important! Caution!

Only a qualified electrician or authorized installer/operator should work on your control panel. Before doing any work on either the wiring to the level control floats and pumps in the vault or on the control panel itself, it is imperative to first switch the isolation fuse/breaker and the circuit breakers in the panel to the "Off" positions, then switch "Off" the power to the system at the main breaker!



Do familiarize yourself with the location of your wastewater treatment system and electrical control panel. Keep the model number of the panel in a safe and handy place along with other important information concerning your septic system. Refer to this number when reporting a malfunction in the system.

Do take immediate action to correct the problem in the event of an alarm condition. Call TCW whenever an alarm comes on; it sounds like a smoke alarm. (It's wise to make the call immediately to avoid the tendency to forget.)



Do remember that the audible alarm can be silenced by pushing the button located directly above the "Push to Silence" label on the front or to the side of the electrical control panel. With normal use, the tank has a reserve storage capacity good for 24-48 hours.

Don't turn off the main circuit breaker to the wastewater pumps when going on vacation. If there is any infiltration or inflow into the system, the pumps will need to handle it.