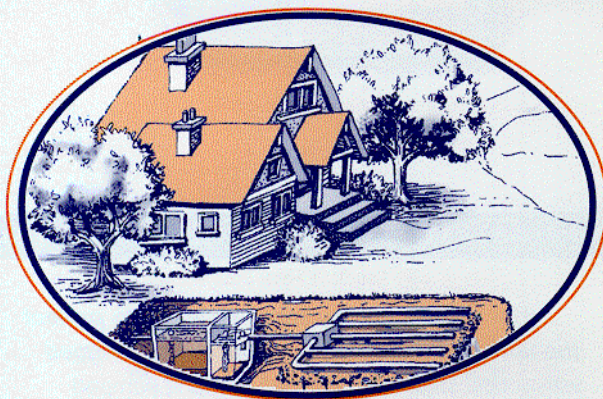


SEPTIC SYSTEM MAINTENANCE

Pure & Simple



A GUIDE FOR HOMEOWNERS

*Your simple step-by step guide
to septic systems maintenance and
trouble-shooting.*

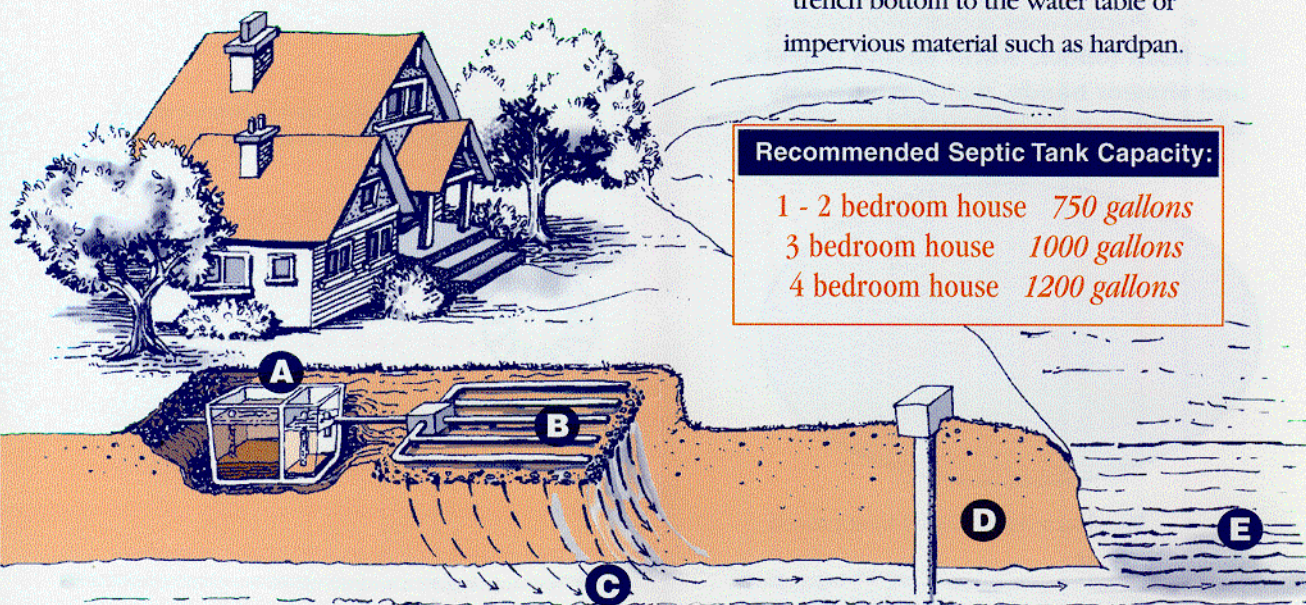
A Conventional Gravity Flow Sewage Disposal System

SIZE AND DIMENSIONS:

The average septic tank requires a space about 10 ft. x 10 ft. The disposal (or drain) field should be 30 ft. x 50 ft. or larger, with an additional area of similar size held in reserve in case of drainfield failure. The drainfield must have 4 ft. of good native soil from the surface to the water table or hardpan and a minimum of 2 ft. vertical separation from trench bottom to the water table or impervious material such as hardpan.

Recommended Septic Tank Capacity:

1 - 2 bedroom house	750 gallons
3 bedroom house	1000 gallons
4 bedroom house	1200 gallons



There are many types of septic systems used around the province. Depending on location and soil condition, homeowners may use treatment plants, sand filters, pumps or siphons. The treatment principals are generally the same in all systems.

In conventional systems, waste water from sinks, tubs and toilets flush out of the house into a tank **A** that separates and stores the solids. Bacteria help to break down some of the heavier sludge and floating scum, but the rest accumulates in the tank until it is pumped out.

The partially treated waste water (or effluent) flows

from the tank into a distribution box that evenly divides the discharge into a network of pipes **B** that lie buried in gravel-filled trenches in the drainfield. Small holes in each pipe allow waste water to seep through the gravel, then into the soil. As effluent trickles through the soil, any remaining particles are removed by natural filtration and bacterial action. When waste water finally reaches the water table **C**, it has been treated and cleansed.

If waste water doesn't get the full treatment contaminants can leach into the ground water **C** that supplies our wells **D**, or drain directly into **E** lakes, streams - or our own backyard!

- **HAVE YOUR TANK PUMPED EVERY 3 TO 5 YEARS.** Septic system professionals should inspect the entire system - field, distribution box and pump chambers.

- Know where your system is. Keep a photo or map and maintenance records.

- Be safety conscious when checking your system. Watch for heavy tank covers, sewer gases and raw sewage.

- Practice water conservation by using **low flush toilets, water saving faucets and shower heads, dishwashers only when full** – your system will last longer.



Do's

- Take hazardous wastes to approved disposal centres.

- Plant grass on your drainfield rather than trees or shrubs. **Water sparingly.**

- Divert roof, patio and driveway runoff away from the drainfield. Keep sump pumps, hillside runoff and foundation drains away from the system as well.

- Protect the reserve drainfield area.

- Ensure that your system is large enough for your needs. Garburetors put extra pressure on the system. So do additional bedrooms or suites.

- Contact your local public health agency for permits for repairs, improvements, installations and further information.

ONGOING Care & Maintenance

Pure water is important to the quality of life we enjoy in British Columbia. How we dispose of waste water once we've used it is crucial to the health of our families and our communities.

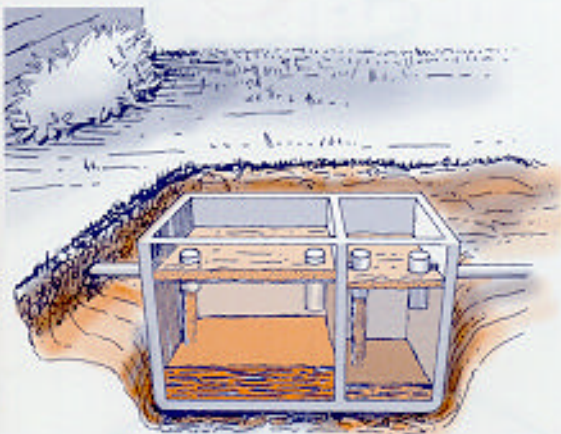
In rural areas, individual sewage disposal (or septic) systems use natural treatment and filtration to clean waste water before it is dispersed underground.

When septic systems work properly, they are efficient, inexpensive to maintain and environmentally friendly; when they fail, they cause odours, water pollution and major expense.

By properly maintaining sewage disposal systems, homeowners play a significant role in protecting our health and natural resources.

WARNING SIGNS

- slow or backed up drains
- patches of lush growth over the drainfield
- unpleasant odours around the yard
- sewage surfacing on lawns or in ditches



TYPICAL SEPTIC TANK INSTALLATION

The key to a healthy septic system is to *protect the tank and drainfield from becoming clogged* with solids. This means having the tank pumped regularly, conserving water and keeping harmful material out of the system.

A plugged tank or disposal field can cause sewage to back up into the house or seep into the environment. This can present a health hazard and be very expensive to repair or replace. It is important to watch for signs that your system may be failing.

- Don't put non-degradables down sinks or toilets. No cigarettes, diapers, hair, grease, cat litter, coffee grounds, etc.
- Don't use commercial septic tank additives; they are unnecessary, expensive and may cause pollution.
- Don't use excessive amounts of bleach or kitchen solvents.

Don'ts

- Don't pour harmful chemicals down your drains: no paint, kerosene, solvents, antifreeze, gas, oil, herbicides or pesticides. These can leach into groundwater and poison the environment.
- Don't stress the system with multiple laundry loads on one day.
- Don't discharge water softening devices into the system.
- Don't park or drive on your drainfield. Outbuildings, patios or pools can compact the soil, crush pipes and reduce aerobic action in the drainfield.
- Don't saturate your drainfield with automatic sprinkling.

Maintenance Record

DATE	WORK DONE	CONTRACTOR

Map your Home

Plot the position of your septic system in relation to your site & home for quick reference



*For more information and a copy of our video contact
your local Public Health Agency*



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