



How to Maintain your Septic Tank

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Maintaining your septic system is important in keeping our lakes and rivers healthy for a long time and to your health too! This information guide about septic tanks is aimed at providing you some information about these environmental issues, as well as to provide an array of tips, information and advice.

Be ecological, clean your septic tank!

Why pump? If your septic tank is not emptied properly, you increase the risk of groundwater contamination, which may consequently result in the contamination of our lakes and rivers. In addition, there is a higher risk of having discharge from your tank if it's not properly emptied.

How do we pump? Contact a qualified contractor who can get the job done right.

When to pump? According to Section 13 of Law Q-2. R-22 (*Regulation respecting waste water disposal systems for isolated dwellings*) your septic tank must be emptied every two years for a full-time resident homes and every four years for seasonal residences (cottage, trailer, hunt camp etc.)

Practical Advice

DOS:

- Regularly empty your septic tank according to standards and municipal regulations;
- Watch for changes that may indicate a poorly maintained drain field;
- Replace older toilets with newer low-flow models;
- Reroute surface run-off water from roofs, patios, walkways and other areas away from the drain field.

DON'TS:

- Don't dispose of products that are not easily degraded and that will kill the good bacteria in your tank (household disinfectant, bleach, oil, grease, diapers, tampons, condoms, hair, cigarette butts, kitchen waste, solvent, paint);
- Don't plant trees or shrubs within two metres of the drain field, to prevent damage from the roots;
- Don't place any heavy objects on top of the weeping bed (machines, vehicles, sheds, etc.);
- If you have a water softener, do not empty the effluent into your septic tank.

Learn a little more...

Know that all undesirable substances being found in rivers or lakes due to human activities are considered to be contaminants. Therefore, it is common to see groundwater contamination due to poor maintenance of septic tanks and unfortunately in most cases, this contamination is impossible to clean. On occasion, it is possible for certain residents to pollute their own wells.

Contaminants from septic systems that may be entering the groundwater contain bacteria, viruses, detergents and household cleaning products. These can create serious contamination problems.

For this reason, it is important to use environmentally friendly, biodegradable and phosphate free cleaning products, because all groundwater flowing into lakes and rivers carry with these contaminants. The accumulation substances like phosphorus are a major cause of the growth of blue-green algae.

Hints

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Avoid snowmobiling near septic tanks.

Insulate the top of the tank with a sheet of polystyrene during winter.

Don't plant trees or shrubs near septic installations.

Reduce water consumption by shortening shower time and avoiding unnecessary toilet flushing.

Why?

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This compresses snow, reducing the natural insulation and increasing the risk of freezing pipes.

Decomposition inside the septic tank is better with higher temperatures.

Roots may damage pipes in the drain field.

If there is too much liquid in the septic tank, solid particles may be discharged and damage the drain field.