

Education and Outreach for Source Protection

On-site Sewage (Septic) Systems

Audiences	Key Content
<p>Rural Landowners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most rural homes and cottages use a septic system. When working properly, septic systems can provide a safe and reliable way to treat your household wastewater. If you do not properly care for your septic system it could contaminate the environment and put your family and neighbour's health at risk. • A septic system is privately owned. You are responsible for ensuring that it is kept in good working order by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Having your septic system inspected every three years; ○ Pumping your septic tank as needed; ○ Changing effluent filters according to manufacturer instructions; ○ Replacing a damaged tank; ○ Increasing the size of your tank if sewage flow increases; ○ Putting an effluent filter on the outflow pipe leading from the tank to the leaching bed; ○ Making sure all pumps and alarms are working (if your system has them). • Regular inspections by a licensed professional should be performed at least every three years. They are important for the proper care of your sewage system and can identify ongoing or potential problems. Inspections can help to ensure a long, useful lifespan for your sewage system, benefitting you and protecting your community's drinking water. In some areas of the province, maintenance inspections are mandatory. Contact your municipality to find out who enforces septic system requirements in your area. • Part of caring for your septic system is being careful about what goes into your system. Avoid putting hazardous household waste, such as paint, grease, laundry detergent

	<p>with phosphates and nail polish remover down your drain. They can damage your septic system and seep into ground water through your leaching bed. Keep items such as dental floss, feminine hygiene products and food solids out of your system. They can build up and clog your leaching bed and pipes.</p>
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RESOURCES

Using the resources below you can find information on septic systems and how they work, how to care for your septic system; and how to identify problems with your septic system.

SEPTIC SYSTEMS	
Link	Septic Systems
Author	Conservation Ontario
Date Published	August 2011
Notes	Practical information about septic systems, how they work, how to take care of them, and what to do if there is a problem.
SEPTIC SMART	
Link	Septic Smart
Author	Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
Date Published	N/A
Notes	A comprehensive program including videos and printed materials explaining how and why to take care of septic systems.

OTHER INFORMATION

- Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
 - [Ontario Building Code](#)
- [Ontario Rural Wastewater Centre](#)
- Your local Conservation Authority, Health Unit or Building Department

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