

## Why Maintain Your Septic System?

Septic systems are designed to keep harmful sewage pathogens in the ground, protecting your family, pets and visitors. However, if not properly maintained, septic systems can lead to untreated sewage leaking into your yard and surface and groundwater, which can:

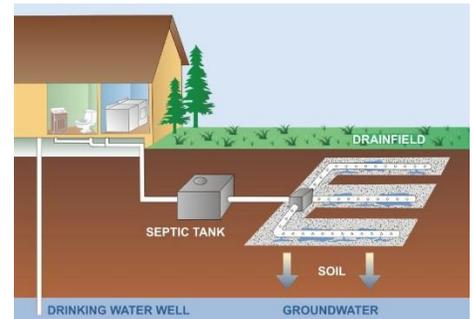
- Carry harmful pathogens that spread disease
- Impact drinking water wells
- Leach pollution and bacteria into nearby lakes or streams, including phosphorus that promotes algae growth

Since septic systems are often out of sight and out of mind, many people may have systems that pose a threat to their health and could pollute nearby lakes or streams. That's why it's so important to have your septic system regularly inspected.

## Get to Know Your Septic System:

As a homeowner, you're responsible for the care and maintenance of your septic system. You can learn about your system by:

- Knowing where your septic tank and drainfield are located. If you don't know where your septic system is, contact Grant County Health District and to request a copy of your As-Built Record Drawing. If one is on file, the Health District will send you a copy. To request your property's as-built records you'll need to submit a public record request which can be found on our website: <http://granthealth.org/public-record-request/>
- Use your system map to locate the tank and drainfield, and whether you have a designated drainfield reserve area on your property.
- There may also be an Operations and Maintenance Manual available for your septic system.
- Basic information about septic systems can be found on the WA Dept of Health website: [OSS Homeowner Education](#)



## Do's and Don'ts for Your Septic Tank, Drainfield and Reserve Area

It's up to you to protect your septic tank, drainfield and reserve area. Here's how:

- Do call a septic service provider if you smell foul odors or find wet spots or leaking sewage near the septic tank or drainfield.
- Do keep deep-rooted plants away from the septic tank, pipes and drainfield. Roots are drawn to the moisture and nutrients and will grow into pipes and underground components.
- Do keep your drainfield and reserve area clear any structures, pavement, livestock, irrigation, sprinklers and stormwater infiltration systems.
- Do plant grass or keep existing native vegetation over your drainfield, these are the best covers.
- Do use water in your house wisely: Fix leaks, use water-saving fixtures, space dishwashing and laundry loads throughout the week.
- Don't plant a vegetable garden over or near the drainfield.
- Don't cover your drainfield with plastic sheeting, bark, gravel or other fill.

- Don't drive across or park over your septic tank, drainfield or reserve area. You'll compact the soil, which hampers its ability to filter water back into the ground.
- Don't direct any surface water drainage toward the septic system, drainfield or reserve area.
- Don't drain a hot tub near the septic tank or drainfield.

## **Perform Routine Inspections at Least Every Three Years!**

Routine inspection of your septic system is a smart investment. By catching a problem early, you can avoid costly repairs and keep your system running efficiently for years to come.

- You should inspect your septic system at least every three years. Make sure to inspect the tank, drainfield and any other system components to make sure they are working properly.
- Pump your tank when recommended by your provider after they assess your system. To save money, when you request service ask for a system inspection and ask for a pump-out only if it's needed.
- More advanced septic systems (e.g. pressure, sand filters, mounds, ATUs, etc.) require annual inspections under the Washington Administrative Code (WAC 346-272A).
- Clean the septic tank outlet filter screen yearly (if you have one).

## **Want to Pump Your Septic Tank or Need Help with Maintenance?**

If you'd like to hire someone to perform operations and maintenance on your septic system, some licensed designers, professional engineers, licensed installers and licensed pumpers will perform septic inspections. You can find a list of these professionals at:

[List of On-Site Septic Designers, Engineers, Installers, and Pumpers](#)

**Risers on your septic tank  
make maintenance simpler  
and save time and money  
locating the lid.**



## **Resources for Home Owners**

[Understanding and Caring for Your Mound System \(PDF\)](#)

[Understanding and Caring for Your Pressure Distribution System \(PDF\)](#)

[Understanding and Caring for Your Septic System \(PDF\)](#)

[Proper Landscaping On and Around Your Septic System](#)

[Septic Systems \(On-site sewage systems\)](#)

[Basics of Septic Systems, 101 Video](#)

[Caring for Your Septic System](#)

[Do-It-Yourself Septic System Inspection Video](#)

[Hiring a Septic System Professional](#)

[Septic Tank Lid Safety](#)

[Signs of Septic System Failure](#)