



**DO YOUR PART,
BE SEPTICSMART!**

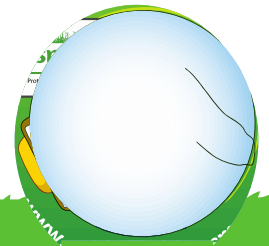
www.epa.gov/septicSMART

THE BASICS

What Is a Septic System?

Common in rural areas without centralized sewer systems, septic systems are underground wastewater treatment structures that use a combination of nature and time-tested technology to treat wastewater from household plumbing produced by bathrooms, kitchen drains, dishwasher and laundry.

It is the end point of your home's plumbing system like your furnace is for your heat and AC!

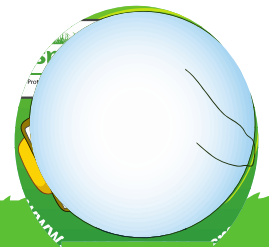


Do You Have a Septic System?

You may already know you have a septic system. If you don't know, here are tell-tale signs that you probably do:

- You use well water.
- The waterline coming into your home doesn't have a meter.
- You show a "\$0.00 Sewer Amount Charged" on your water bill.
- Your neighbors have a septic system.

If you have a septic it is **YOUR** responsibility to maintain it!



How does a septic system work?

This is a simplified overview of how a septic system works.

1

All water runs out of your house from one main **drainage pipe** into a septic tank.

2

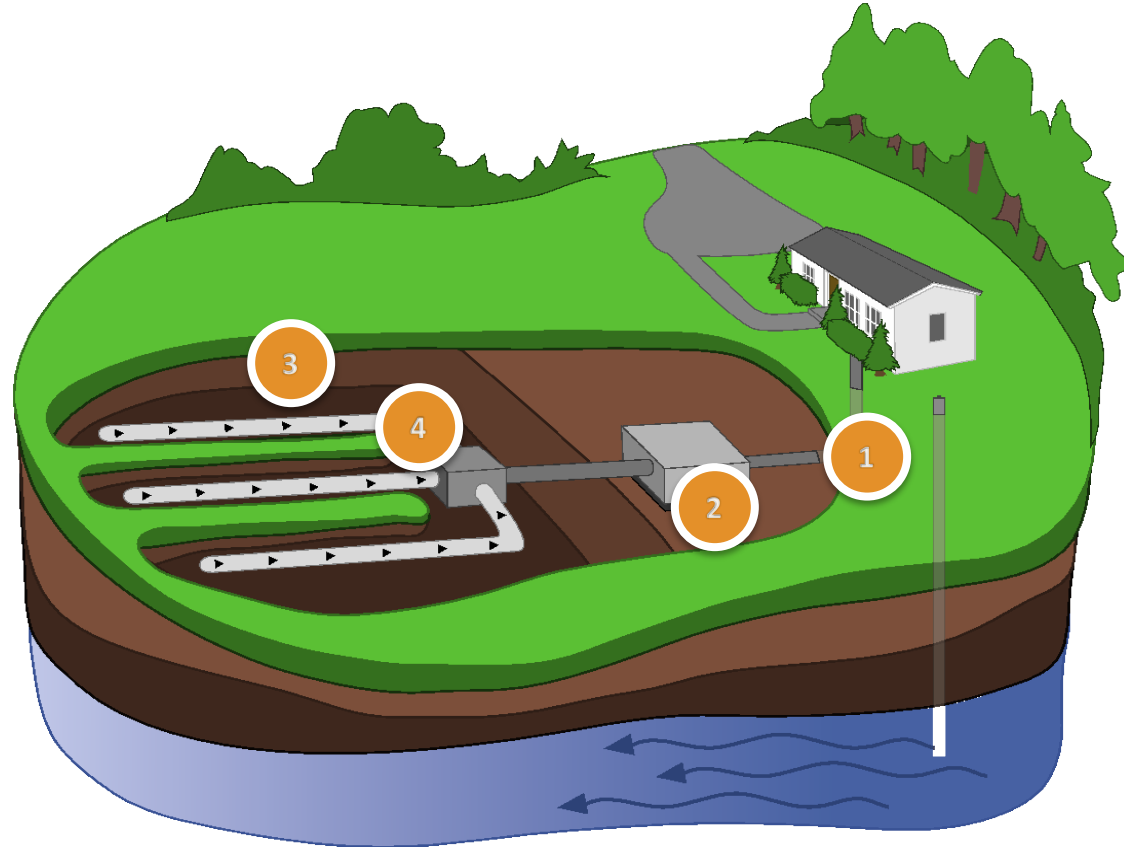
The **septic tank** is a buried, water-tight container usually made of concrete, fiberglass or polyethylene. Its job is to hold the wastewater long enough to allow solids to settle down to the bottom (forming sludge), while the oil and grease floats to the top (as scum). Compartments and a T-shaped outlet prevent the sludge and scum from leaving the tank and traveling into the drainfield area.

3

The liquid wastewater then exits the tank into the **drainfield**. If the drainfield is overloaded with too much liquid, it will flood, causing sewage to flow to the ground surface or create backups in toilets and sinks.

4

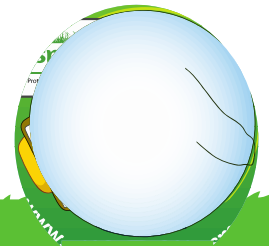
Finally, the wastewater percolates into the **soil**, naturally removing harmful bacteria, viruses, and nutrients.



Groundwater = source of your well water

WHY MAINTAIN?

- Saves you \$
 - A few hundred dollars every 3-5 years for maintenance or ranging ~\$8k - ~25k to replace.
- Protects your property value
 - Homes with failing septics could be more difficult to sell.
- Protects your and your neighbors' well water
 - A failing septic can contaminate well water; test your well water quality (untreated to your tap).
- Protects your and your neighbors' health
 - A failing septic can bring wastewater above the surface, creating a health hazard for you, your neighbors and animals.



Failure Symptoms – Mind the Signs!

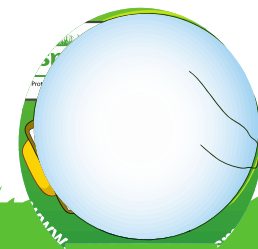
A foul odor isn't always the first sign of a malfunctioning septic system.

Call a qualified professional if you notice any of the following:

- Wastewater backing up into household drains.
- Bright green, spongy grass on the drainfield, even during dry weather.
- Pooling water or muddy soil around your septic system or in your basement.
- A strong odor around the septic tank and drainfield.

One call to a qualified professional could save you thousands of dollars!

Contact your local or state health department for more information.



PROPER CARE

Inspection & Pumping

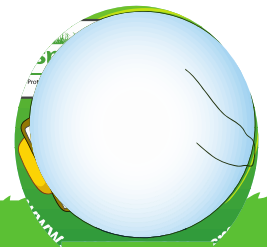
Inspection - Alternative systems with electrical float switches, pumps, or mechanical components need to be inspected more often, generally once a year.

Pumping and Servicing your System - Four major factors influence the frequency of septic pumping:

- Household size
- Total wastewater generated
- Volume of solids in wastewater
- Septic tank size

Household septic tanks are typically pumped every three to five years.

Call a qualified professional and/or follow your state/local health department's recommendations.





Sam's Do's and Don'ts

PROTECT IT AND INSPECT IT

THINK AT THE SINK

DON'T OVERLOAD THE COMMUNE

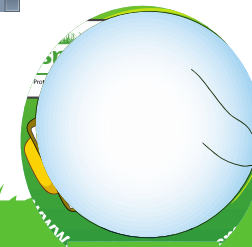
SHIELD YOUR FIELD

DON'T STRAIN THE DRAIN

SepticSmart Website

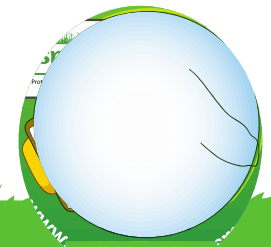
The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the SepticSmart website. The address bar shows the URL <http://water.epa.gov/infrastructure/septic/septicsmart.cfm>. The website has a blue header and a dark blue sidebar on the left with a navigation menu. The main content area features a large yellow banner with the text "Welcome to SepticSmart Homeowners, learn the ins and outs of your septic system." and a cartoon character. Below the banner are navigation buttons for Home, The Basics, Why Maintain?, Proper Care, and Resources. The main text area contains a "Welcome to SepticSmart!" section with introductory text and a "SepticSmart Quick Links" sidebar with links to SepticSmart Week, System Failure Causes, Frequent Questions, Glossary, and Contacts. There is also a section for "Looking to Launch a Local Outreach Campaign?" with a link to the SepticSmart Outreach Toolkit. The browser's taskbar at the bottom shows various application icons and the system clock indicating 10:21 AM on 4/27/2015.

www.epa.gov/septicsmart



SepticSmart ToolKit

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the EPA SepticSmart ToolKit page. The browser's address bar shows the URL <http://water.epa.gov/infrastructure/septic/local-outreach-toolkit.cfm>. The website header includes the EPA logo and navigation tabs for 'LEARN THE ISSUES', 'SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY', 'LAWS & REGULATIONS', and 'ABOUT EPA'. The main content area is titled 'Water: Septic (Onsite / Decentralized) Systems' and 'Local Outreach Toolkit'. A prominent blue button reads 'Launch a Homeowners Outreach Program'. Below this, text explains the need for Adobe Acrobat Reader and provides information on how EPA's SepticSmart initiative helps promote outreach goals. A sidebar on the left lists various water-related topics. On the right, there are 'SepticSmart Quick Links' and a section for 'Looking to Launch a Local Outreach Campaign?'. The browser's taskbar at the bottom shows the Windows Start button, several application icons, and the system clock indicating 2:50 PM on 8/4/2015.

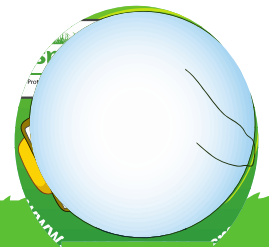


RESOURCES

Toolkit Materials (English & Spanish):

<http://water.epa.gov/infrastructure/septic/local-outreach-toolkit.cfm>

- Homeowners' Guide (short and long)
- Do's and Don'ts (for conventional and advanced systems)
- Mail Insert
- Graphics
- Door Hanger
- Post Card Mailers
- Proper Landscaping
- Top 10 List
- Suggested Activities for Homeowners



Annual SepticSmart Week

- Last full week of September each year

The purpose is to educate using the messages of the SepticSmart program across the country about the importance of maintaining and properly caring for your septic system through your daily activities.

Highlighted Activities from past years:

- Dedicated webpage
- Community highlights map
- Blogs
- News articles
- Workshops
- Exhibit of materials
- Proclamations
- PSAs/Radio Spots



Mark Your Calendars!

SepticSmart Week

September 19-23, 2016

