

Septic System Basics

Your system includes a tank, filter, leach field or aerator. Here are the basics for keeping your system healthy.....

Don't overload the system

- Install low-flow fixtures.
- Fix water leaks
- Stage laundry loads
- Limit using the garbage disposal
- Limit chemicals you pour down the drain.
- If using 2 leach fields, switch every 6 months to allow the other to rest.
- Divert rainwater, footer drains & sump pumps away from the leach field.



Don't cause physical / biological damage

- Divert water softener discharge away from the system
- Place garbage in "the can" not the toilet.
- Keep the area over the system free from parking, pavement, buildings, & trees / shrubs.
- Avoid using septic system additives.

Don't forget maintenance.

- Regularly maintain the system.
- Keep a record of the location.
- Keep records of pumpings & repairs.
- Keep system lids above ground for access.

SAFETY FIRST

- Keep system lids secure at all times.
- Never climb into a tank or aerator, as there are toxic gases that can kill.

Never Flush...

Coffee Grounds	Paint or Varnish
Dental Floss	Thinners/Solvents
Diapers	Antifreeze
Baby Wipes	Pesticides
Sanitary Napkins	Herbicides
Tampons	Gas or Kerosene
Condoms	Floor Waxes
Fats, Oil, or Grease	Kitty Litter
Additives	Hair or Lint

Warning Signs of a Failing HSTS:

- Slow draining (gurgling) toilets & drains
- Sewage backing up into your home
- Sewage odors inside or outside
- Lush, green growth or damp or soggy spots over the leach field
- Sewage around the lids of your tank or aerator

Additives Myth

Some companies claim their additives help keep a septic system healthy or the tank will never need pumping. Many industry authorities are skeptical because none have proven to improve long-term performance and some are even known to be harmful to the system and the environment.

Bottom line...save money, do not use additives.

Septic Tank Effluent Filter

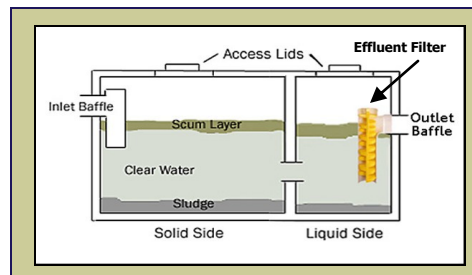
An effluent filter inside a septic tank will keep solids from clogging the leach field. All newly installed tanks have one and they can be easily added to existing tanks.



Inspect annually & clean as needed usually every 6 months. If you prefer, contact a Registered Hauler or Service Provider to clean it for you.

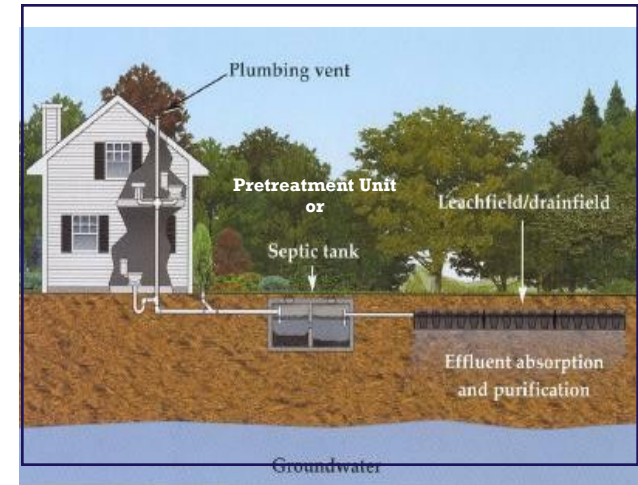
To clean the filter...

1. Remove outlet lid on the tank. Use caution as there are toxic gases and pathogenic organisms.
2. Wear gloves and lift up on the handle of the filter removing it from the sleeve.
3. Gently hose off filter removing debris into the tank. Wear protective eye-ware and be careful not to splash.
4. Carefully replace filter into the sleeve. If your filter has an arrow, line it up with the outlet pipe.
5. Secure tank lid. Wash & sanitize hands/clothing.



Building Healthy Communities

Marietta/Belpre City Health Department Environmental Division



Guide to Home Sewage Treatment System Maintenance

Tel: 740-373-0611 ext. 2303

The Health Department's mission is to develop and maintain an efficient and effective system that will provide for the highest quality of public health services practicable, and to promote and protect the community's physical, mental, social and environmental well being.

Septic System 101...

Most of us maintain our vehicles by changing the oil and rotating the tires. This protects our investment and provides safe transportation. The same should be true of your home sewage system. A properly designed, installed, and maintained system can provide many years of service. Lack of care and/or abuse will result in problems, premature failure, and costly repairs. At stake is your money, your family's health, protection of our drinking water, and the environment.



What is an HSTS?

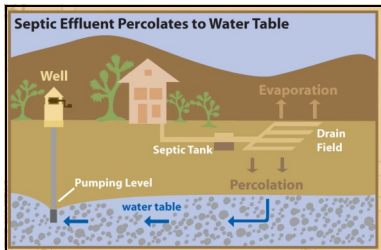
A Household Sewage Treatment System (HSTS) treats and disposes of your home's wastewater preventing contaminants from entering surface and groundwater. The most common HSTS is a septic tank or pretreatment unit that drains to a leach field. Many pretreatment units may discharge instead directly to a creek or ditch or to the surface of the ground.

Septic Tank - A buried watertight tank made of plastic or concrete that separates and retains solids, fats, oils, and grease so the leach field does not get clogged.

Pretreatment Unit - Same as a septic tank but with electrical or mechanical components that breakdown and remove 85–90% of the disease-causing organisms. The most common are aerators.

Leach Field - Enclosed trenches that allow wastewater to move through the soil. The soil acts as a natural filter absorbing organic matter, bacteria, and viruses.

The naturally purified wastewater then evaporates or moves to surface or groundwater. **Many HSTS have 2 leach fields that should be switched every 6 months.**



Why do Systems Fail?

Too much water...

Your HSTS is designed to handle a certain amount of water. Too much will overload the tank or aerator sending solids into the leach field. Excessive water in the leach field will overload the soil's drainage capacity. Use low-flow fixtures and divert gutters and sump pumps away from the system.

Too much organic matter...

Will clog soil pores so the leachfield cannot drain. Most organic matter is introduced through a garbage disposal so limit how much it is used or better yet compost. Broken/missing baffles or lack of an effluent filter in the septic tank, or clogged or broken filters in the aerator will also allow solids out.

Chemicals...

Too many chemicals or toxic chemicals will kill the bacteria needed to naturally breakdown organic matter in the septic tank or pretreatment unit and the soil.

Physical Damage...

Broken or missing lids are a safety hazard and will allow excess water into the system. Driving over or allowing livestock on the leach field will compact the soil impairing its ability to drain.

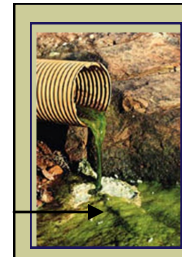
Lack of maintenance...

For **Septic tanks** - pump out and clean outlet filter. For **Aerators** - service every 6 months and pump as required by the operation permit. For **Leachfields** - switch fields every 6 months.

Lack of knowledge...

For more information contact...

- * The Environmental Division @ 740-373-0611 ext. 2303
- * The Ohio Department of Health at: www.odh.ohio.gov



Who to Call for Servicing?

Pretreatment units require periodic servicing so their components work properly. Filters and motors can gum up and break. It is cheaper to prevent breakdowns than to repair or replace these parts. Units should be serviced every 6 months. Service Providers are registered and bonded through the Health Department.



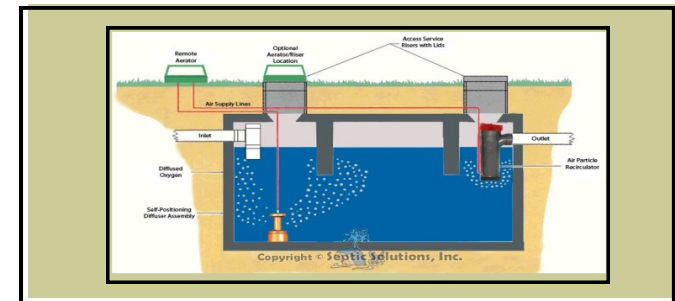
Who to Call for Pumping?

Septage Haulers are registered and bonded through local Health Departments. Contact yours for a complete list.

What is an O&M Program?

An Operation & Maintenance (O&M) Program is required by the Ohio Revised Code. The requirement became effective January 2015. Local Health Departments are required to track and maintain records on each system. To do that, an owner of a system will be issued an Operation Permit which will have an expiration date. The program protects you and the environment.

Make sure you contract with a Service Provider who is certified for your specific type of unit.



Typical aerator