

SEPTIC TANK PUMP-OUT

Septic tanks require pump-outs when the solids that accumulate in the tank begin to reach the tank's storage capacity. The tank should be pumped when total solid accumulation is between 30% and 50% of the total capacity. You are encouraged to observe the pump-out and to use the checklist below to ensure that all steps are completed.

WHAT WILL THE PUMPER DO?

Before Pumping

- Note the liquid level of the tank in relation to the tank's outlet pipe. A liquid level below the outlet pipe usually indicates a tank leak. A liquid level above the outlet pipe can indicate a problem with the pipe to the drainfield or the drainfield itself.

Pumping

- Pump the tank from the manhole. Pumping from inspection ports may damage tees and baffles. However, if pumping must occur from inspection ports, be sure to pump from both ports in order to pump all areas of the tank.
- Watch for backflow from the tank outlet pipe. Significant backflow indicates a drainfield system backup. A small amount of backflow can indicate a sag in the pipe to the drainfield.
- Pump the tank thoroughly. Use a septage spoon and backflush to loosen the sludge in the corners of the tank.
- Do not "seed" the tank by leaving septage in it.
- Do not scrub or power wash the tank's walls.

After Pumping

- Check the empty tank and note any signs of structural damage such as an open weep hole, leaking midseam, damaged baffles, or cracks.
- File report with the town. Check with your local town hall to find out whether you or the pumper need to provide the report of the completed pump-out.



How Can I Reduce the Number of Pump-outs Needed?

You can save time and money by taking a few daily precautions that reduce the frequency of pump-outs your system will need:

- **To flush or not to flush** — Aside from wastewater, toilet paper is the only other thing that should be flushed. Using the toilet to dispose of sanitary products, paper towels, disposable diapers, cigarette butts, and even tissues will harm your septic tank and cause you to need pump-outs more often.
- **Don't use a kitchen garbage disposal.** Septic systems are not intended to dispose of food waste, coffee grounds, grease, or fat, and, in fact, they will harm the septic tank. Try using a compost pile; it will reduce the number of pump-outs your system needs!
- **Reducing water usage** will protect your septic system. Repair leaky faucets and toilets; install low-flow water fixtures, and turn off the water while brushing your teeth or shaving. Water conservation reduces the load of wastewater your septic system has to handle.

