

Homeowner's Guide to Septic System Maintenance

These are the basic components for proper maintenance of your septic system. Although each is very simple, each is also very important!

Plant grass over your entire lateral field as soon as possible

Planting grass is a key component to ensure that your system works properly. Grass absorbs the wastewater and also prevents rainwater from entering the lateral trenches and filling up valuable storage space.

Do not construct buildings, driveways, or parking areas over your septic system

Construction of buildings, driveways, or parking areas over any part of your septic system is prohibited by the Douglas County Sanitary Code. The grass cover mentioned above is essential for the proper functioning of the lateral field. The septic tank must be pumped regularly to prevent accumulated solids from overflowing into the lateral field. All parts of the septic system should be easily accessible for observation, maintenance, and repairs if needed.

Avoid compacting or damaging the lateral field

Vehicles and livestock can cause extensive damage to the lateral field, by destroying the grass cover and compacting the soil so that it cannot absorb the wastewater as designed, and may physically damage components of the lateral field. Never drive vehicles or equipment heavier than a riding mower across your lateral field. Keep livestock fenced away from the lateral field area – horse and cattle hooves deliver several hundred pounds of pressure per square inch with every step.

Conserve water

All septic systems have a limited amount of wastewater storage. The EPA estimates that normal household water usage should be about 50 gallons per day per person. If you are on rural water, routinely check your monthly water bill to monitor how much water you are using.

Pump your septic tank regularly

Follow the chart below to monitor how often your septic tank should be pumped out. Pumping out your septic tank as scheduled can prevent serious and expensive damage to your lateral field.

Recommended Frequency for Pumping a 1,000-Gallon Septic Tank

Number of persons in household:	1	2	3	4	5
Recommended pumping interval (years):	12	6	4	3	2