

HOW does it work?

A typical septic system has four main components: a pipe from the home, a septic tank, a drainfield, and the soil. Microbes in the soil digest or remove most contaminants from wastewater before it eventually reaches groundwater.

The septic tank is a buried, watertight container typically made of concrete, fiberglass, or polyethylene. It holds the wastewater long enough to allow solids to settle out (forming sludge) and oil and grease to float to the surface. It also allows partial decomposition of the solid materials. Compartments and a T-shaped outlet in the septic tank prevent the sludge and scum from leaving the tank and traveling into the drainfield area. Screens are also recommended to keep solids from entering the drainfield.

The wastewater exits the septic tank and is discharged into the drainfield for further treatment by the soil.

Microorganisms in the soil provide final treatment by removing harmful bacteria, viruses and nutrients.

HOW do I maintain my septic system?

You should have your septic tank serviced as necessary, generally every 1-3 years, based on your system and the number of occupants in your household.

Average indoor water use in the typical single-family home is 70 gallons per person per day. The more water a household conserves, the less water enters the septic system.

Remember that the septic tank is not a trash can. Products such as paper towels, sanitary napkins, cigarette butts, etc. are best not put into the septic tank. Things that will not decompose should not be flushed down the toilet. Similarly, greases, fats, coffee grounds, etc. should not go down the kitchen sink.