

Do Your Part, Be SepticSmart: The Do's and Don'ts of Your Septic System

Learn these simple steps to protect your home, health, environment and property value:



Protect It and Inspect It:

Do:

- Have your system inspected (in general) every three years by a licensed contractor and have the tank pumped, when necessary, generally every three to five years.

Think at the Sink:

Don't:

- Pour cooking grease or oil down the sink or toilet.
- Rinse coffee grounds into the sink.
- Pour household chemicals down the sink or flush them.

Do:

- Eliminate or limit the use of a garbage disposal.
- Properly dispose of coffee grounds & food.
- Put grease in a container to harden before discarding in the trash.

Don't Overload the Commode:

Don't:

- Flush non-degradable products or chemicals, such as feminine hygiene products, condoms, dental floss, diapers, cigarette butts, cat litter, paper towels, pharmaceuticals.

Do:

- Dispose of these items in the trash can!

Shield Your Field:

Don't:

- Park or drive on your drainfield. The weight can damage the drain lines.
- Plant trees or shrubs too close to your drainfield, roots can grow into your system and clog it.

Do:

- Consult a septic service professional to advise you of the proper distance for planting trees and shrubs, depending on your septic tank location.

Don't Strain Your Drain:

Don't

- Concentrate your water use by using your dishwasher, shower, washing machine, and toilet at the same time. All that extra water can really strain your septic system.

Do:

- Stagger the use of water-generating appliances. This can be helpful especially if your system has not been pumped in a long time.
- Become more water efficient by fixing plumbing leaks and consider installing bathroom and kitchen faucet aerators and water-efficient products.

For more SepticSmart tips, visit: www.epa.gov/septicSMART

How Can I Protect My Private Well and Water Supply?

Protect Your Well from Damage

- Check the well cover or well cap on top of the casing (well) to ensure it is in good repair.
- Take care when working or mowing around your well. A damaged casing could jeopardize the sanitary protection of your well.

Protect Your Well From Contaminants

- Store hazardous chemicals, such as paint, pesticides, and motor oil far away from your well.
- Maintain a “clean” zone of at least 50 feet (15.24 meters) between your well and any kennels or livestock operations.

Do It Yourself or Call a Professional?

- An annual well maintenance check, including a bacterial test, is recommended. Home owners can perform this test. Visit <http://bit.ly/1JAzlNK> for details.
- Drinking water should be professionally checked any time there is a change in taste, odor, or appearance, or when the well system is serviced. Visit <http://1.usa.gov/1lod4IC> for a list of Registered Water Well Drilling and Pump Installation Contractors.

Know the Area Near the Well

- When landscaping, keep the top of your well at least one foot above the ground. Slope the ground away from your well for proper drainage.
- Always maintain proper space between your well and buildings, waste systems or chemicals.
- Don't pile snow, leaves, or other materials around your well.
- When your well has come to the end of its serviceable life (usually 20+ years), have a qualified water well contractor decommission it after constructing your new system.

Record Keeping

- Keep your well records in a safe place. These include the construction report, as well as annual water well system maintenance and water testing results.

Additional Resources Available

- For more information about protecting and maintaining your well visit www.wellowner.org.
- Local resources are also available by visiting the Barry-Eaton District Health Department (BEDHD) website at <http://bit.ly/1HGr9O4> or by visiting one of the BEDHD offices at 1033 Healthcare Drive in Charlotte or 330 W. Woodlawn Avenue in Hastings.



**Barry-Eaton District
Health Department**

Be Active • Be Safe • Be Healthy

For the Hastings office, call 269-945-9516

Ext. 35

For Charlotte office, call 517-541-2615.