

# TOST in Pictures

## Part 2—Septic

Barry-Eaton District Health Department

# About TOST

The Time of Sale or Transfer (TOST) program helps to protect the health of our community and our environment. On-site wells can be contaminated by harmful germs, nutrients such as nitrates, and other chemicals. On-site septic (sewage) systems can carry disease and contaminate water. TOST aims to make sure that wells are not in danger of being contaminated and that septic systems are not in danger of contaminating groundwater, ponds, streams, rivers, and other bodies of water.

# Pictures of septic issues

The pictures below show septic issues that could endanger human or environmental health. All images were taken by BEDHD sanitarians or Registered Evaluators in Barry and Eaton counties during TOST inspections.

# Sewage on ground surface

When a sewage system is in a state of failure, it usually becomes completely saturated (full of sewage and water). Untreated sewage can then migrate to the ground's surface. Wet weather conditions can help exacerbate this. You can see ponding sewage in this yard beyond the playset and sandbox.





# Sewage on ground surface

A plastic line was added to the end of a saturated drainfield, providing a route for sewage to travel to the ground's surface without being properly treated.





# Black stone

When a drainfield is at the end of its working life, the stone in the drainfield becomes black and sludgy. This indicates that the system is not keeping up with the household water usage.





# High septic tank water level

When a drainbed is completely saturated, the water has no place to go and can flow back into the septic tank. Here, the liquid level in the septic tank was almost up to the lid of the tank.



# Septic tank collapse

The top of this septic tank collapsed, leading to an open pit filled with raw sewage. The bottom of a septic tank is normally four to six feet below the ground's surface. Humans and animals can fall into collapsed septic tanks and be seriously injured.





# Waterway contamination

The black pipe located at the bottom of this picture led directly from the septic tank to the bank of the Thornapple River



# Want more information?

For more information on TOST, visit the Environmental Health section of <http://barryeatonhealth.org/> or call one of our offices:

- Hastings office
  - (269) 945-9516, menu option 3 then 5
  - 330 W. Woodlawn Avenue
- Charlotte office
  - (517) 541-2615
  - 1033 Health Care Drive