

Take Care of Your Septic System

*Does “out of sight, out of mind” describe the way you feel about your septic system? If you rely on one of the several tens of thousands of septic systems in Wyoming, this may be a threat to your peace of mind in the future. **Proper maintenance** is a very important part of maintaining a worry-free septic system and can prolong the life of the system for many more years. Here are a few very simple things you as a homeowner can do to keep your system working its best for many years.*

1. Know the location of your system (map is included or at courthouse). It is very important that you do not drive on or store heavy items (car, boats, RVs, horses, hay, etc.) on the septic system. Heavy items may collapse the system and heavy use or storage over the field will compact the soil and encourage freezing in the winter.
2. Conserve water whenever possible. Leaky toilets, long showers, or other excess water use is often the cause of a failed septic system. Do not let the water run in the winter to keep pipes from freezing as the excess water can flood your system. Also, use low flow showerheads and toilets and try to spread out or limit your laundry loads.
3. Have a septic pumper clean your septic tank. The average 1,000 gallon tank should be pumped every **three** years to keep solids from building up to a point where they may start entering the drainfield and clog the system. Seasonal homes should be pumped every five years.
4. Install tank risers (required by regulation) up to the ground surface to make it easier to access the tank for pumping. It will cost more to have a tank pumped if the pumper has to dig it up each time they come out to clean the tank. Risers also serve as a reminder that the tank is out there and needs maintenance.
5. Biological septic additives with bacteria, enzymes, and/or yeasts may be helpful (especially in winter), but do not use in place of tank pumping.
6. Avoid washing food and grease down a garbage disposal. Garbage disposals can increase the amount of solids in your tank by 50% and are not recommended for use with septic systems. Use sparingly if used and pump the tank more often.
7. Never put harsh chemicals down your septic system. Many chemicals can kill the bacteria that help breakdown the solids in your tank. Chemicals such as strong acids, drain cleaners, solvents, or old antibiotics/medicines can be harmful to your system. Normal amounts of bleach when washing clothes is acceptable. Consider using **liquid** laundry soaps; powdered soaps can leave sediment in pipes and the septic tank.
8. Don't use your toilet as a trash can. Many items commonly flushed down the toilet may overburden your septic system. Items such as dental floss, diapers, tampons, sanitary napkins, kitty litter, cigarette butts, paper towels and greasy items should never be put into your septic.
9. Landscaping can be a benefit to, or can hurt, a septic system. Do not plant trees and large bushes close to the drainfield. The roots can clog drain lines and cause failure. Grass above the drainfield can benefit a system by using some of the water you are trying to get rid of. Divert water and plowed snow away from the drainfield and tank areas. Excess water running onto the drainfield can be a problem to your septic system. It is a good idea to cut the grass in the fall so that it does not collect a lot of snow in the winter. Tall grass will also reduce evaporation.

Your septic system is not something you should take for granted. A system that has failed is not only a headache, but can be a threat to the health of your family, community, and the environment. Septic systems are also expensive to repair, not to mention the damage to your landscape.

If there are any questions or problems, please call the County Sanitarian: 367-2754

SEPTIC PUMPING SCHEDULE

About every 3 years. Name & number of Pumper_____

DATE	NOTES FROM OWNER OR SEPTIC PUMPER

- Please save your septic tank map (along with this page) for future reference.