

What are the benefits of routine maintenance?

By having your septic system inspected and/or pumped out every five (5) years, you are protecting the health of your family, community, and the environment. Maintaining your septic system makes good economical sense because failed systems can cost thousands of dollars to repair or replace. They can also cause property values to decline significantly.



Questions?

For information regarding the maintenance of your septic system, please contact us at the numbers or email listed below.



County of Franklin

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Franklin County



Maintaining Your Septic System



A Guide for Homeowners

What is a septic system?

A septic system is designed to collect, treat, and release wastewater from your home. Wastewater flows into your septic tank and separates; heavier solids collect on the bottom and lighter liquids like soap scum, float to the top. The separated water flows out of the tank and into the drain field where it is eventually absorbed and filtered by the soil. This water is then used by plants or reintroduced into the groundwater table.



(Source U. S. EPA)

Why should I maintain my septic system?

An improperly functioning septic tank can allow contaminated wastewater to enter surface and groundwater supplies. Failing septic systems can degrade water quality in streams and lakes through bacterial and viral contamination or nutrient overload. Groundwater is the source of drinking water for many people with septic tanks. Preventing drinking water contamination makes good sense in terms of protecting your health and the environment.

Do Not Flush

Cat litter

Cigarette butts

Sanitary napkins

Condoms

Disposable diapers

Fat, grease, or oil

Paints

Pesticides

Coffee grounds

Paper Towels

Tampons

Thinners

Varnishes

Waste Oils

These items overburden or destroy the biological process taking place in your system.

It's the law

Franklin County's Septic Pump-out Ordinance requires that all on-site septic systems that are within 500' of Smith Mountain Lake be pumped out or inspection once every five (5) years. Residents shall provide inspection documentation from a licensed sewage handler stating that their system is functioning property and does not need to be pumped out or an inspection document stating the system is in good working order.

Do's and Don'ts

Do...

- Learn the location of your septic tank and drain field. A sketch of your system is available at the Health Department.
- Have your septic system pumped every five (5) years.
- Pump your septic system every two-and-a-half years if you have a garbage disposal.
- Keep your septic tank cover accessible.
- Call a professional whenever you experience problems.
- Keep a detailed record of repairs, pumping, inspections, etc.
- Conserve water to avoid overloading the system. Repair leaky faucets or toilets.
- Divert other sources of water, such as roof drains, house footing drains, and sump pumps away from the system.

Don't...

- Go down into your septic tank. Toxic gases produced can kill in minutes, even if just looking into the tank.
- Drive or park over any part of the system.
- Plant anything over the drain field or build over it.
- Repair systems without permits.
- Use septic tank additives. Some may be harmful to your system.
- Use a garbage disposal unless your system can accommodate the additional waste.
- Allow back wash from home water softeners to enter the system.
- Install sprinkler systems within 20 feet of the drain field.