Helpful Hints for Homeowners

Knowing how to keep your septic system healthy will ensure that it is functioning properly and will prolong its useful life. With that thought in mind, we've created a list of helpful hints based on over 50 years of practical experience. It is our hope that you'll follow these suggestions because they will save you time, money and protect the environment.

NEVER enter a septic tank. The gases within the tank are toxic and can be fatal.

Pump your tank regularly. Clogged drainfields are the leading cause of septic system malfunctions and failures. Regardless of what the advertisers claim, there are NO chemical or biological additives that can substitute for a regular septic tank pumping.

Monitor water consumption. Your system was designed to handle certain amounts of water based on the number of occupants living at your residence when the system was installed. Make adjustments if the water usage increases drastically.

Conserve water. Reducing the water flow into the system produces less agitation within the tank, keeping the solid waste at the bottom of the tank. Keeping the solids in the tank prolongs drainfield life.
- Showers require less water than baths.
- Front loading washers use 1/3 less water than top loading units.

Read product labels carefully. Make sure they are safe for your septic system. Many will actually be labeled, "Septic System Friendly."
- There is no such thing as a "Flushable" wipe!

Use the strainer in your kitchen sink. This will help prevent large food particles from going down the drain and causing a backup.
- If you have a garbage disposal, use it sparingly! Garbage disposals can increase the amount of solids in your septic tank by up to 50%.

Know the exact location of your septic tank and drainfield. This can save time when the system needs to be pumped or repaired.
- Keep your drainfield free of trees, shrubs, roots, storm water runoff and standing water. These will damage or interfere with the operation of the drainfield.
- Never drive heavy equipment or vehicles over your drainfield. This can damage the area and cause a system failure.
- Always insist that the tank be pumped through its large central manhole, not the smaller diameter baffle inspection ports. Pumping through the inspection ports will prevent thorough tank cleaning and may damage critical tank components. If deeply buried, a riser extension can be installed on the manhole to make it more accessible for pumping.
- Keep a copy of your new system sewage permit and application in a safe place for possible future reference.

Harmful Products and Practices
NEVER place these harmful products or foreign objects into your septic system!
- Gasoline, oil or other petroleum products
- Cooking grease and oils
- Paint, paint thinner or solvents
- Products with high levels of phosphorous (often found in laundry detergents, cleaning supplies, etc.)
- Large quantities of bleach, concentrated cleaners or anti-bacterial products
- Feminine products, makeup removing wipes or baby wipes

Knowing When to Pump Your Septic Tank
This chart is a pumping schedule guideline based on average water usage. Most residential septic tanks have enough room to hold sludge for up to 2 years. An increase in water usage by appliances, toilets, showers, laundry etc. can increase the frequency you'll need to have your septic tank pumped. If you run a business from your home like a daycare, beauty shop or dog grooming parlor, you should have your tank pumped more frequently.

IMPORTANT! NEVER go longer than 5 years without pumping your septic tank regardless of tank size, usage or number of people in your household.

Number of People in Household						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Size of 1st Tank (gal)	Years Between Pumping						
500	4	2	1	1	1	0.5	0.5
1000	4	3	3	2	2	1	1
1500	5	4	3	3	3	2	2