

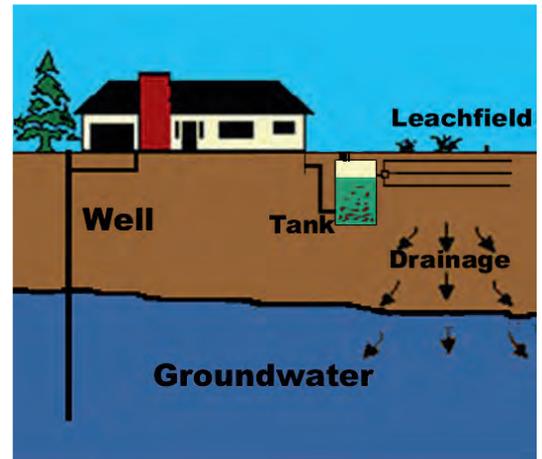
Your Septic Tank

The Lot 11 & Area Watershed Management Group

August 2010

Your Septic Tank

- ➔ Your septic tank is the first stop for your wastewater after it leaves your home. It traps solids in the waste and prevents them from entering your leachfield. Once the solids have been trapped, the water flows into the leachfield where it is evenly distributed to the soil. As the water filters through the soil it is purified by natural processes.
- ➔ If the solids in the tank are not **regularly pumped out**, they will fill the tank and overflow into the leachfield. When the solids enter the leachfield, they clog the soil pores and reduce the drainage of the water. Solids and grease also reduce the soil's ability to purify the wastewater.



To work properly, your septic system must be properly designed, located, and maintained.

Your Lifestyle and Your Budget

- ➔ When the leachfield is clogged with solids, wastewater backs up in your system. Drainage from your plumbing fixtures is slow. The area above the leachfield gets soggy and smelly, and the grass above the leachfield may become rich and green. Eventually, wastewater backs up into your house. To fix it, a new leachfield may need to be constructed. Your yard will be excavated and your lifestyle will be disrupted. With today's construction standards and permit requirements for new installations, it will be expensive.
- ➔ Proper system maintenance including regular tank pumping is a wise preventive strategy.

Your Drinking Water (and Your Neighbor's)

- ➔ When the soil in your leachfield becomes clogged, its ability to clean the water is impaired and contamination could migrate to drinking water sources.
- ➔ Have your well water tested regularly for bacteria.

Your Environment and Economy

- ➔ Household wastewater is rich in nutrients and bacteria. It may also contain harmful substances like bleach and other household chemicals. If the leachfield is ineffective, these contaminants may enter the groundwater and flow to local streams and tidal waters, contributing to environmental problems.
- ➔ Contamination in our tidal waters – from any source – may result in shellfish closures and directly impact the livelihoods of our area's fishermen.
- ➔ Our community setting and our tourism industry depend on a clean, healthy environment.
- ➔ Don't let your septic system be part of the problem.

How Often Should We Pump the Tank?

- ➔ Pump the tank every two to three years depending on your household size and the capacity of the system. Call us (831-3379) or email (karen.rank@lot11andarea.org) for more information.



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www.lot11andarea.org