

SEPTIC SYSTEM

OWNER'S GUIDE



DISCLAIMER:

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INFORMATION WITHIN THIS GUIDE WAS COMPILED FROM A VARIETY OF RESOURCES INCLUDING THOSE BELOW:

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency-MPCA: <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/>

University of Minnesota OSTP: <http://www.septic.umn.edu>

Minnesota Onsite Wastewater Association: <http://mowa-mn.com>

MN rules 7080: <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/7080/>

BROUGHT TO YOU BY:



FIEDLER'S
Your Pumping Specialists

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I HAVE WASTEWATER BACKING UP... WHAT NOW!?

Septic Alarm or Backup? Here's What to Do:

If your septic alarm goes off or water backs up:

1. **Stop using water immediately.**
2. **Call us during daylight hours at 320-252-9916.**
3. At night, stop all water use. Most problems will not get worse once you stop using water. Diagnosing systems after dark is almost impossible, so stopping water will buy time until it is light enough for us to visualize the system.
4. If an outside water source (ie rain) is causing your issues, call us right away to discuss your options.



We provide **free phone consultations** to help determine the best service options for your system.

To help us diagnose what is wrong with your system, please have the following information available when you call:

1. **Septic Tank Access**
 - Do you have inspection pipes or manholes on your system?
 - If you have a manhole, can you visualize the inlet and outlet baffles?
 - If you only have inspection pipes, we may need to pump the tank to see inside.
2. **External Pumps**
 - Do you have pumps outside your house?
 - Did your alarm go off? When?
 - Is your pump running nonstop? This could mean there is a clog, a float issue or a broken line somewhere in the system.



Services We Provide

We are licensed to provide a full range of maintenance services to ensure your septic system is working properly:

- **Septic Tank Pumping** – Removal of all solids and liquids from your tank using special tools and a vacuum truck to clean it out completely.
- **Septic System Maintenance** – Diagnosing system issues and assessment of system function.
- **Lift Pump Service** – Repair or replacement most home septic pumps. We service and stock alarms, floats, and pedestals.
- **Frozen Line Clearing** – High-pressure hot water jetting machines may be used to clear ice blockages in septic and sewer pipes during the winter.
- **Risers & Covers** – We use ©Seal-R® brand risers and covers to extend your septic tank manholes to the surface. During replacement, we can also recycle your old concrete covers. Bringing your covers to grade helps prevent rainwater from entering the system and adds insulation to your tank during the winter months.

NOTE: WE DO NOT OFFER SEPTIC CERTIFICATIONS OR TANK INTEGRITY FORMS AT THIS TIME.

SEPTIC SYSTEM BASICS

How a Septic System Works

A septic system treats all the wastewater from your home, helping keep your environment clean and safe. If it isn't functioning properly, it can pose health risks to you, your family, and even your pets. With regular maintenance, a septic system can provide reliable service for many years.

Main Parts of a Septic System

1. **Plumbing Pipes**-Carry wastewater from sinks, showers, toilets, laundry, and dishwashers.
2. **Septic Tank**-An underground container that holds the water and separates solids, liquids, and grease.
3. **Drainfield**-Pipes that spread cleaned water into the soil for final treatment.

What type of water should go into a Septic System

- The types of water that should go into a septic system include water from toilets, sinks, showers, laundry machines, and dishwashers.
- Water that should not go into a septic system-because it can overload or disrupt the system-includes roof drain water, pool water, sump pump discharge, hot tub water, furnace discharge, and water from water softeners or reverse osmosis systems.

What Happens in the Septic Tank

When wastewater enters a 1,000 to 2,500-gallon septic tank, it separates into three layers: solids sink to form sludge, grease and soap rise as scum, and liquid remains in the middle as wastewater. Bacteria in the tank break down waste, converting about half of the solids into liquid or gas. Most tanks have two chambers: the first holds sludge and scum, while the partially treated liquid flows into the second chamber and then to the drainfield. Baffles or filters help prevent solids from escaping and clogging the system. Routine Maintenance of your system ensures no solids float off and clog your drainfield lines.

How the Drainfield Works

The drainfield has pipes with small holes buried in gravel and soil. These pipes spread the water allowing it to soak into the ground. The soil and bacteria help remove any leftover waste, chemicals, or germs.

A special layer called a **biomat** forms where the water meets the soil. It helps control how fast water moves through so the soil stays dry enough to work properly. Wastewater must travel through **at least three feet of clean, dry soil** to ensure water is clean before it reaches the groundwater.

What Is a Mound System?

If the soil is too wet or drains too fast, some homes require a **mound system**. This system includes a drainfield that is raised above ground and uses a pump to move water evenly through it to ensure there is 3 feet of separation.

Locating a septic system and drainfield

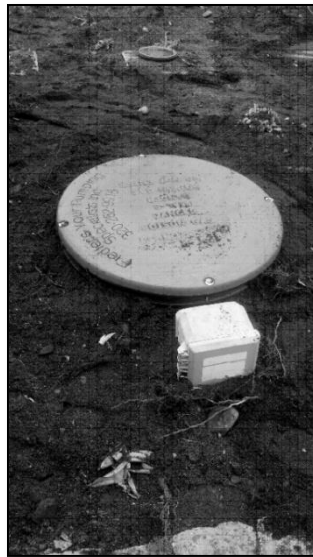
Our experienced Maintainers can often identify your septic system just by visually inspecting your yard. However, when no components of the system are visible above ground, locating the access points for wastewater removal can be more challenging.

When searching in the yard look for:

- Shallow, straight dips in the yard (these may be drainfield lines)
- Open areas away from large trees or rocky ground
- Homeowners may also inquire at their county office or with the original installer for a map of their septic system.



Questions? Need Service? Call 320-252-9916



We recommend **adding risers and covers** to any tank that doesn't already have them to ensure your tank is easy to find and service throughout the year.

****CALL 320-252-9916 for cover and riser installation!***

TAKING CARE OF YOUR SEPTIC SYSTEM

Why Maintenance Matters

- Minnesota rules recommend septic maintenance at a minimum of every **3 years**.
- A well-maintained system treats wastewater safely for years.
- A failing system can cause health problems and cost thousands to fix.
- Before selling your home, a septic certification may be required to ensure it is working appropriately.

Pumping Your Tank

- Wastewater solids build up in the tank and must be pumped out regularly.
- If sludge reaches the outlet pipe, it can clog the drainfield leading to backups or leaks.
- A septic tank will always appear to be "full" because it is designed to ensure water flows to the drainfield with each use.
- Smaller tanks, more people, or using garbage disposals can lead to the need for more frequent pumping.
- **Best time to pump:** Any time in the summer when the ground isn't frozen. This ensures adequate bacterial growth before winter.

Taking Care of Your Drainfield

- Keep grass growing over the drainfield for good drainage and protection.
- NEVER park cars, build patios, or place heavy things on it - this can crush pipes and soil.
- Do not allow water from sump pumps or roof drains to flow on or near the drainfield - it can flood the soil.
- Watch for low spots where water collects - a drainfield should stay dry on the surface.
- The septic tank cover should be easy to find and should be level with the ground surface.
- Avoid planting trees or shrubs with big roots nearby as roots can break pipes.
- Do not water the grass over the drainfield - extra water can cause problems.

Control Your Water Use

Average water use: **60-100 gallons per person per day**.

Leaky toilets or faucets can waste **up to 200 gallons per day!**

The more water you send into the septic tank, the faster it flows into the drainfield. Too much water can overload the drainfield and cause system failure.

Questions? Need Service? Call 320-252-9916

Only licensed professionals should provide septic system services or repairs!

SIGNS OF A FAILING SYSTEM:

- The grass over the drainfield looks different-darker, greener, or patchy.
- The ground near the tank or drainfield is soft or squishy or you note a consistent unpleasant odor.
- Water may drain slowly or backs up in your sinks, tubs, or toilets.
- You notice unexplained sewage odors inside or outside your home.
- Algae may be noted in nearby lakes or ponds.
- Your property well water may test high in bacteria or nitrates.
- Water sits on the surface over the drainfield, especially after rain or laundry.
- Drains gurgle or drain slowly (check for clogs and open roof vents first).

COMMON QUESTIONS

Alarm Sounds?

- Alarms will usually only sound if there is an urgent issue with the septic system.
- If an alarm sounds, limit water use and call a septic professional within 24 hours.

Access Through Pipes

- Maintenance is considered optimal when completed through manhole access.
- If a system only has inspection pipes and the homeowner does not want their yard dug up, they are legally required to sign a waiver allowing for inspection pipe cleaning.

Finding Septic Tank Covers

- Covers must be visible and easily accessible before service.
- Extra fees may apply if locating or digging up of manhole covers is required.

How often should a tank be Pumped?

- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency recommends septic system maintenance at least every **3 years**.
- Our Septic technicians will make recommendations regarding service scheduling once they have assessed your system.

Tank Refilling time

- Septic Tanks usually fill within 1-3 weeks after being cleaned.
- If a tank fills faster, it may indicate leaks or water entering the system from faulty plumbing within the home.

Using Septic Starters or Additives?

- Bacteria grow naturally in a septic tank. Additives are NOT recommended as they can cause problems.
- Notify your septic professional if you or anyone in the home is on antibiotics or chemotherapy as these can alter your tanks bacteria.

Planting Mound Systems and drainfields

- Avoid planting trees near mounds or drainfields. Roots can damage pipes.
- Grass is usually best; some special plants may be allowed near the drainfield base.

Manholes should always be Accessible

- Do Not bury tank covers.
- We recommend poly covers rather than concrete covers as these allow for secure and easy access for our technicians.
- Call 320-252-9916 for a quote on installing manhole risers and covers.



WE TRULY APPRECIATE OUR CUSTOMERS, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO PAY AT THE TIME OF SERVICE! YOUR PROMPT PAYMENT HELPS US CONTINUE PROVIDING RELIABLE SERVICE TO OUR ENTIRE COMMUNITY!

Customer Service Agreement & Payment requirements

We strive to make our service process straightforward. Our team is committed to delivering dependable, high-quality septic services when you need it.

Invoices:

- **Residential customers** receive a handwritten invoice at the time of service.
- **Commercial customers** are emailed an invoice within 72 hours of service.
- Residential customers may also request an emailed copy of their invoice within 72 hours after service.

Payment Terms:

- Payment is due upon completion of service.
- If a customer is not home at the time of service, payment in full must be received within 30 days to avoid late fees.
- Any service exceeding \$200, may require a deposit at the time of scheduling.
- Emergent Same day services may incur additional fees and require same day payment.

Late Fees:

- Interest may be charged at 1.5% of the remaining balance per month (minimum \$2.00).
- Late fees are automatically applied and will be reflected in month-end statements.

Delinquent Accounts:

- 90 days past due – No further credit extended.
- 150 days past due – No further credit will be extended, and service reminders will no longer be sent.
- 180 days past due –Accounts will be sent to collections, and added to our "Do Not Service" list. This list may be shared with other local septic service providers at our discretion.

Returned/Declined Payments

- Checks: Returned checks are subject to applicable bank fees as well as a \$20 clerical fee.
- Credit Cards: Declined transactions may incur bank fees and a \$20 clerical fee.

Collections & Legal Action

- All debts are the customer's responsibility, in addition to any collection agency or attorney fees required to recover past-due balances.

Credit Card Transactions

- A 3% convenience fee may apply to credit card transactions.

Customer Contact information Responsibilities

- Customers are responsible for ensuring we have updated contact information.
- Finance charges resulting from missed invoices due to outdated contact information remains the responsibility of the customer.

THANK YOU FOR BEING A LOYAL CUSTOMER!

Questions? Need Service? Call 320-252-9916