



Conservation Notes

Town of New Castle
Conservation Board

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Septic System Maintenance Tips

HOW CAN YOU HELP PROTECT THE TOWN OF NEW CASTLE'S WATER RESOURCES? It's easy. Follow the tips below to use and maintain your septic system so that pollutants from the system do not leach into the Croton Reservoir or the Hudson River watersheds.

A septic system, just like a car, appliance, or tractor must be properly operated and maintained to ensure long-term, cost effective service. Many septic systems are installed and forgotten. After all, they're buried in the yard, "out of sight -- out of mind."

Licensed professionals design and install septic systems, but often uninformed homeowners are responsible for their operation and maintenance. Septic systems must treat all wastewater from our homes and prepare it for recycling back into nature while protecting human health and valuable water resources.

SEPTIC SYSTEM MAINTENANCE

Your septic system is an important part of your home. It treats the water you use everyday. A failed septic system is very expensive to fix and can be a significant source of ground and surface water contamination. Periodic maintenance will prevent failure to a properly constructed system. Follow these simple steps to help protect your home investment and water quality.

Pump it out. Septic tanks should be inspected every 2 to 3 years. When necessary, have your tank pumped out by a reputable septic tank service contractor, who is required to have a state permit to handle and dispose of the materials. Businesses are listed in the telephone directory, or you can call

Westchester County Health Department.

Conserve water. To keep your septic system functioning properly, avoid flooding the drain field with excess water. Conserve water inside your home, repair leaky faucets and running toilets, and spread out water-intensive activities like showers, dish-washing and laundry.

Avoid harsh chemicals. Drain cleaners, toilet bowl cleaners and "miracle system cleaners" will kill the bacteria that are necessary to break down sludge in your septic system. Check product labels to see if they are safe for use in septic systems.

Use a trash can. Septic systems are designed for disposal of toilet wastes, tissue, soaps and water used from bathing, laundry and dishwashing. Disposing of improper solids in your septic can cause clogging and failure since the system can't break down the material. Dispose of solids such as cigarette butts, diapers, coffee grounds, tampons, condoms and grease in your household trash.

Avoid field compaction. Be sure you know the location of your septic tank and drain field. Never park, drive or build on your tank or drain field. Soil compaction and pavement break pipes and prevent oxygen from getting into the soil (bacteria need oxygen to break down and treat sewage).

Check for signs of failure. Look for areas in your lawn that remain moist during dry times. Check for excessive grass or plant growth. If you live near a stream or pond, check for excessive plant and algae growth along the shoreline. If you see signs of failure, schedule an inspection and necessary repairs immediately.