

Front Range Septic (970) 302-0457

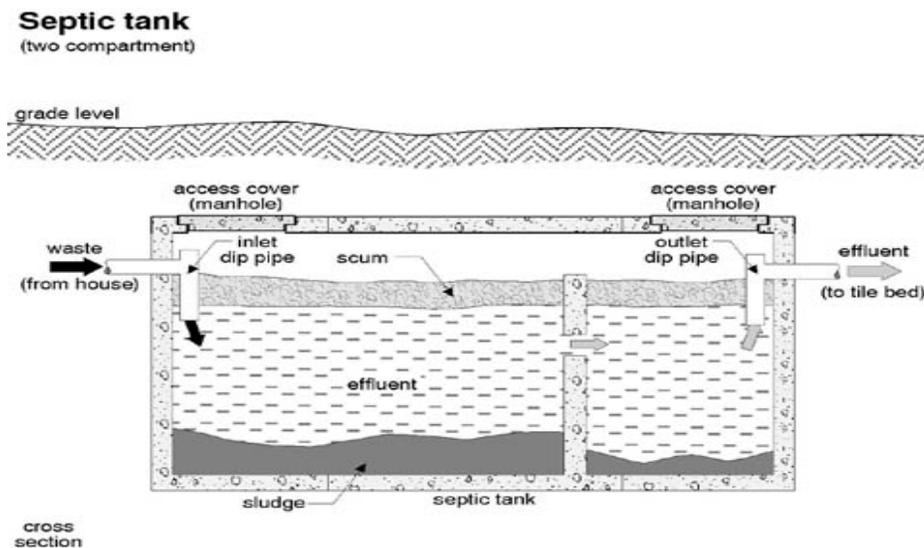
Septic Tank Owners Guide

How does it work?

Waste from toilets, sinks, washing machines and showers enters the septic tank, which is a holding tank generally made of pre-cast concrete or fiberglass and is sized according to the estimated wastewater flow from a given-sized residence or business.

The septic tank separates the wastewater into three general components -- solids or "sludge", floatable or the "scum layer", and a zone of relatively clear water. Anaerobic bacteria (able to live in an oxygen-free environment) perform the first treatment of the wastewater, generating gas that is vented through the vent stack of the building's plumbing, and breaking the solids into a liquid form.

From the septic tank, the liquid portion of the wastewater flows into the leach field, which is generally a series of perforated pipes or slotted panels that are usually surrounded by a layer of gravel. The leach field also provides filtration of the wastewater as gravity draws the water downwards through the soil layers. In addition, evaporation of water occurs through the layer of soil covering the drain field.



How often should I pump it?

Maintenance of a septic tank will depend largely on the daily sewage flow and individual household wastewater characteristics. With ordinary use and care, a septic tank should not require pumping out more than once every two to four years.

Waste from kitchen garbage disposal units puts an extra load on a septic tank system. If a disposal is used, the capacity of the tank should be increased to handle the increased solid wastes. The tank may also require more frequent pumping to remove accumulated solid waste buildup.

Failure to pump out a septic tank system when indicated will result in solids or greases overflowing into the leach field, which in turn may become clogged and stop functioning. In this event, not only will the tank have to be pumped out, but the leach field may also have to be replaced.

DO!	DON'T...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repair leaky faucets and toilets. One leaky faucet can waste as much as 700 gallons of water a year. • Use less water when possible. Use low-flow fixtures. Too much water from laundry, dishwasher, toilets, baths, and showers may not allow enough time for sludge and scum to separate, causing solids to pass out of the tank and into the leach field, ultimately clogging the pipes. • Keep cars and trucks off the septic tank and leach field areas. This prevents pipes from breaking and soil from becoming compacted. Compacted soils can't absorb water from the leach field. • Spread out your laundry over several days to give the septic system more time to digest the water • Run dishwashers and clothes washers only when full, and use the cycle with the lowest number of rinses • Allow only grass to grow on top of the tank and leaching field. • Keep roof drains, surface water from driveways, basement sump pump drains, and other drainage systems away from the leach field. • Limit garbage disposal use. A garbage disposal adds solids and grease to your system, which could lead to leach field failure. • Do use a bacteria additive in moderation to help promote healthy bacteria in your septic tank. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DON'T flush dental floss, feminine hygiene products (tampons or sanitary napkins), paper towels, diapers or baby wipes, condoms, cotton swabs, cigarette butts, coffee grounds, plastic, or cat litter. • DON'T flush even small amounts of paint, solvent, thinners, disinfectants, pesticides, or oils down the drain or toilet. These chemicals can destroy the bacteria that break down solids in the septic tank, and pollute groundwater. • DON'T use large amounts of laundry soap, detergents, bleaches, toilet bowl cleaners and caustic drain cleaners. Recommended quantities should not adversely affect the system. • DON'T allow excess amounts of fat or grease to enter the system. It can congeal and cause obstructions. • DON'T use garbage disposals. If it doesn't come from your body, then it shouldn't be going into your septic. Garbage disposals add organic mass to the tank, so the design process calls for a 50% increase in the volume of tanks plus a filter or divided tank. From a management perspective the filter should be cleaned annually and the tank cleaning will be needed usually twice as often as a system without a disposal. • DON'T plant trees or shrubs on or near the leaching field. Roots can clog up your tile bed and cause backup and surface seepage. • Don't assume that if you use a bacteria additive you can avoid pumping your septic tank. These additives only help digest the solids. You still need to remove the inactive sludge at the bottom of your tank at regular intervals.

*Note: Front Range Septic has provided these recommendations to help you properly maintain your septic. For more information, please contact your county's Environmental Health Department.