



## 10 Things A Homeowner Should Know About Septic Systems.

### **YOUR SEPTIC SYSTEM WILL REQUIRE SCHEDULED PUMPING.**

All counties in Wisconsin now require routine pumping and some form of inspection on all types of POWTS (Private On-Site Wastewater Treatment Systems). Counties require that a septic system be pumped and inspected every two to three years. Holding tanks have no drain field and will require pumping every 4 to 6 weeks.

### **SEPTIC SYSTEM COVERS ARE REQUIRED TO BE LOCKED.**

State code requires that all exposed septic tank covers be chained and locked with a warning label on the cover, at all times. This requirement is designed to prevent unauthorized entry or children from falling into the tanks.

### **YOUR SEPTIC TANK MAY HAVE A SERVICEABLE FILTER.**

Since October of 2004, septic tanks are required to have a filter installed at the outlet of the tank on a conventional system or before the pumping chamber on a mound system. The filter will require cleaning two or more times a year by the homeowner or be contracted out to a septic maintainer.

### **KEEP HEAVY VEHICLES OFF OF YOUR DRAIN FIELD OR MOUND.**

Driving cars or trucks over the drain field can compact the soil and cause premature failure by not allowing the waste water to flow properly into the soils. Continuous travel of ATV's or snowmobiles over the mound can have the same adverse effect.

### **BE CAREFUL OF WHAT YOU FLUSH OR POUR DOWN YOUR DRAIN.**

Introducing the wrong things into your septic system can shorten its life dramatically. Products or items that do not break down can eventually end up in your drain field or mound. Use septic safe toilet paper. Do not flush bath tissue, Kleenex, Puffs etc, these products do not dissolve. Keep all personal/feminine hygiene products, cleansing wipes, out of your system. Things like cigarette butts and dryer sheets can easily plug up the small holes in mound lateral or drain field pipes. Heavy use of chlorine bleach or certain pharmaceuticals can kill the bacteria that the system needs to function properly.

### **AVOID PLANTING ANYTHING ON YOUR MOUND OR OVER YOUR DRAIN FIELD.**

Keep plants and trees away from your mound or drain field. Plants, tree and shrub roots love the "rich effluent" produced by a septic system and will seek out the source, plugging up the holes in the pipes and causing premature failure of the drain field or mound.

### **SEPTIC SYSTEMS DO HAVE A LIFESPAN.**

Contrary to popular belief, septic systems do not last forever. Just as everything we use has a life; our cars, our appliances, our electronics our clothing, so do our septic systems. Many factors can effect how long a system will last such as proper sizing at construction, or were there bedrooms added to the house later without increasing the size of the absorption unit. How many people are using the system on a daily basis? Has the system been properly maintained and pumped as required? What is the composition of the soils on the property? Eventually the drain field just can't handle any more effluent and the system reaches the end of its life.

### **USE YOUR GARBAGE DISPOSAL ON A VERY LIMITED BASIS.**

Garbage disposals can discharge many little solid pieces into the septic tank which could then either plug up the filter which could result in the system backing up into the septic tank, or could cause plugging and premature failure of the mound.

### **LEAKING FAUCETS OR LEAKING TOILETS CAN SHORTEN THE LIFE OF YOUR DRAIN FIELD OR MOUND.**

What seem to be small, insignificant leaks or drips can add up to a huge amount of water over a 24 hour a day, seven day a week period of time. Septic systems are designed and sized for a certain daily amount of water. When that amount is exceeded, the drain field or mound can become saturated, and surface discharge and system failure can result. Make sure all plumbing leaks or drips are repaired promptly.

### **YOU ARE BEING VERY "GREEN" WHEN YOU OWN A SEPTIC SYSTEM.**

A septic system is a wastewater recycling system that uses the soil to treat wastewater before returning it the groundwater. The water from your well stays on your property and is not being piped away to a far off treatment facility. A properly cared for and functioning septic system is something to be proud of!

