

Limit what you pour down the drain or flush down the toilet. Anything other than water can impact your septic system.



Ok Down the Drain:

- Cleaning products
- Dishwater
- Produce wash water (no dirt)



NOT Ok Down the Drain:

- Garbage disposal (limit use, even if system is designed for one)
- Food waste
- Grease/fat
- Chemicals
- Paint



Ok to Flush:

- Toilet paper



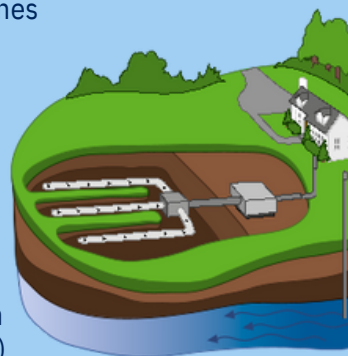
NOT Ok to Flush:

- Paper towels
- Cigarette butts
- Disposable diapers
- Wipes (baby or flushable)
- Feminine hygiene products
- Plastics
- Medications
- Cotton (swabs or balls)
- Dental floss
- Toxic substances

The drainfield is a vital part of your septic system. Having the right landscaping on and around your system is important, as tree and shrubbery roots can grow into the drain lines. Strong roots and heavy items can cause the drainfield and your system to fail.

Make sure the septic tank and drainfield area is clear of:

- Underground sprinkler lines
- Decks and patios
- Sports courts
- Storage sheds
- Swing sets
- Sand boxes
- Driveways
- Vehicles
- Swimming pools
- Trees and shrubs (within 20 feet of the drainfield)



DON'T:

- Plant a vegetable garden on or near the drainfield.
- Put plastic sheets, bark, gravel or other fill over the drainfield.
- Reshape or fill the ground surface over the drainfield and reserve area. However, just adding topsoil is generally OK if it isn't more than a couple of inches.
- Make ponds on or near the septic system and the reserve area.



DO:

- Plant grass or keep existing native vegetation. These are the best drainfield covers.
- Direct all surface drainage away from the septic system.
- Use shallow-rooted plants. Tree and shrub roots can grow into the drainlines, clogging and breaking them.
- Avoid water-loving plants.
- Make sure the tank lid is secure.

For more septic system information, visit www.mass.gov/septic-systems-title-5 or contact your local Board of Health.



A Homeowner's Guide to Being Septic Smart

A Brochure for Septic System Care

The purpose of your septic system is to dispose of your household waste water in a way that does not contaminate groundwater, wells, or surrounding bodies of water. Proper maintenance is the key to ensuring a long life for your septic system. This brochure will help you protect your investment and avoid the high cost of septic system failure.



Brought to you by the Great Meadows Public Health Collaborative using material from the EPA's SepticSmart campaign and the University of Massachusetts Cooperative Extension System brochure.

January 2023

Do Your Part. Be Septic Smart!

Get Your Permit

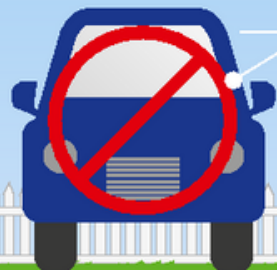
Don't make repairs to your system without the proper permits from your Board of Health.

Write It Down

Keep a record of pumping, inspections, and repairs.

Shield Your Field

Divert rain and surface water away and avoid parking vehicles and planting trees on your drainfield.



Don't Overload the Commode

Don't flush diapers, wipes or other items meant for a trashcan down the toilet.



Toilet paper only

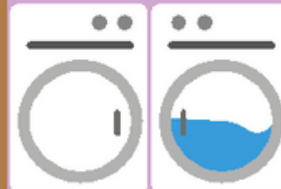
Think at the Sink

Avoid pouring fats, grease, solids and harsh chemicals down the drain.



Don't Strain Your Drain

Use water efficiently and stagger use of water-based appliances, such as your washing machine or dishwasher.



Protect It and Inspect It

A typical septic system should be serviced every 1-3 years by a septic service professional.

Pump Your Tank

Ensure your septic tank is pumped at regular intervals as recommended by a professional. If you have an effluent filter, clean it annually.

Keep It Clean

If you are on a well, test your drinking water regularly to ensure it remains clean and free of contamination.

Drainfield

Septic Tank

Groundwater Recharge

Aquifer

Well



830-F-180-03 | May 2018
www.epa.gov/septic