

Septic Systems in South Brunswick

South Brunswick Township does have homes in various locations which are serviced by septic systems. Typically these areas are rural in nature and public sewer is not available.

Septic systems are composed of two basic components: a septic tank and a disposal field. Septic tanks are water tight to prevent infiltration of ground water or storm water and are required to be large enough to hold the sewage for approximately two days before it is discharged to the disposal field. For a single family home with at least 4 bedrooms, the septic tank has to be at least 1,000 gallons in capacity. Add an additional 250 gallons of capacity for each bedroom over 4.

Sewage which enters the septic tank is retained for a short period of time, during which it breaks down into scum, sludge and liquid effluent. Most solid matter will settle to the bottom as sludge while buoyant grease, fats and hair will float to the surface and form a scum layer. Between these two layers is the clean effluent which drains into the disposal field.

The disposal field is a series of underground perforated pipes which overlay a bed of gravel approximately 12 inches in thickness. The perforated pipes distribute the waste water throughout the entire area of the disposal field.

Recommended Operation and Maintenance Practices

Septic systems owners are unique in that unlike areas served by regional public sewerage systems, the septic system owner is solely responsible for the daily operation and maintenance of the wastewater treatment and disposal system. By adhering to simple and straight forward guidelines, the septic system owner can ensure years of trouble-free operation with a minimal degree of maintenance.

Recommendations for Septic System Maintenance are as follows:

- **DO** practice water conservation where possible. Excessive water use can compromise your septic system's ability to treat and dispose of waste water.
- **DO** try to distribute dish washing and laundry throughout the week rather than all at once during one or two days.
- **DO** avoid showering and bathing at times when dishwasher and laundry are in use.
- **DO** fix all leaking faucets and toilets.
- **DON'T** discharge floor drains or sump pumps into septic systems.
- **DON'T** pour cooking oils, fats and grease into the kitchen sink.
- **DON'T** add a garbage grinder to a home with an existing septic system.
- **DON'T** flush inert or non-biodegradable items down sinks or toilets.
- **DON'T** flush toxic substances down sinks or toilets. Introduction of substances such as waste motor oil, oil based or acrylic paints, varnishes, photographic solutions, pesticides, insecticides, paint thinners, and organic solvents and degreasers into a septic system not only compromises its performance, but also contributes to ground water pollution.

- **DON'T** use septic system cleaners that contain banned substances. Examples or banned substances include trichloroethanes, benzene toluene, naphthalene, phenols, or acroleins.
- **DO** maintain a diagram of the location of all components of your septic system. Copies of plans may be available at the South Brunswick Health Department depending on the age of the system.
- **DO PUMP YOUR SEPTIC TANK.** NJDEP recommends that septic tanks be pumped out completely at least once every 3 years, by a licensed septic hauler, and records of the pumping be retained by the homeowner.
- **DON'T** drive on, or park vehicles or trailers over the area of the disposal field.
- **DON'T** plant trees or other vegetation with extensive and deep root systems near the septic system.
- **DON'T** divert surface water runoff towards the disposal field.
- **DON'T** construct driveways, parking lots, accessory buildings, additions to the main building, decks, patios or sprinkler systems which encroach upon any component of the septic system.
- **DON'T** add commercial septic tank additives. Human wastes or wastes of household origin which float into a septic tank contain an adequate variety and quantity of microorganisms to maintain proper operating conditions within a septic tank.
- **DO** call the South Brunswick Township Health Department at 732-329-4000 ext. 7237 before any work on a septic system is conducted except for routine pumping of your septic tank. Local Board of Health permits are required for any construction on alterations to septic systems in South Brunswick.