



NATIONAL PROPERTY INSPECTIONS

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SEPTIC DO'S AND DON'TS

- Pump your tank. Septic tanks should be pumped every two to three years to prevent solid material from entering the lateral lines and blocking fluid movement. St. Charles County recommends septic tank pumping every two (2) years.
- Do not put anything in your toilet except human waste and toilet paper. Anything other than human waste and toilet paper may increase the need to pump the septic tank and may travel into the lateral lines and cause blockage.
- Use only liquid or low phosphate detergents. Solid detergents liquefy when agitated but return to solid form. These solids may travel into the lateral lines and cause blockage.
- Keep the finished grade below the bottom of the lids. To prevent mud and rainwater infiltration, the bottom of your septic tank lids must be kept above finished grade (including mulch or other landscaping materials). If a leach field is installed on a hillside, the area around the high side of the field should be bermed to prevent surface water run-off.
- Do not drive over or pasture animals on your lateral lines. Compaction of the soils around your lateral lines greatly reduces their absorbent qualities.
- Do not run your water softener through your septic system. The brine in water softeners kills microorganisms and destroys the bacterial action inside the septic tank. Additionally, the extra effluent from the softener puts an additional strain on the drain field and can cause a system to fail.
- Garbage disposals. Garbage disposals add an extra load to the tank and result in the need for frequent cleaning and possible system failure. Be aware that coffee grounds, egg shells, raw vegetables, meat, and dissolvable soap packets are not biodegradable in the septic tank and that grease can clog the drain field piping. Adding chemicals and enzymes to the tank has not been proven beneficial and may actually cause the system to clog.
- Do not run roof drains, sump pumps, or drain tiles over or toward the drain field area. Excessive ground water will cause sewage effluent to rise to the surface. Reduce this risk by diverting your roof drains, sump pumps, and drain tiles away from your drain fields.
- Reduce water use. Be aware of what you are putting into your septic system. An excessive amount of laundry in one day adds a large volume of water at one time into your septic system. To avoid septic overload, try spacing laundry out over a several day period. Installing low volume toilets and low pressure shower heads, as well as repairing all leaky faucets or running toilets will also help to reduce water usage.
- Rainfall amounts. Be aware that excessive rainfall can also cause septic system failure.
- Dense clay soils. The dense clay soils common to St. Charles County can cause septic systems to fail at any time, especially in wet conditions.

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